BOOKS ON THE TABLE

EDMUND GOSSE

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BOOKS ON THE TABLE

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EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.

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TO

GEORGE MOORE

MY FRIEND FOR FORTY YEARS

PREFACE

With the tip of the feather of my quill between my lips, I sit wondering how I am to recommend these miniature monographs. "Here they are, my forty men and women," but what diminutive creatures, to be sure! They are a selection from the ten-minute sermons which, for some time past, I have been delivering every week to the congregation of the *Sunday Times*. I make no apology for their brevity, since that was inevitable. Books, very properly, have to be satisfied with what crumbs of space may fall from the platters of Football and the League of Nations. If Literature were bigger, Golf would have to be less bulky, and how dreadful that would be!

The best of newspapers is in its physical essence ephemeral, and its substance is like breath upon glass. If we miss it for a week, it is lost for ever, and lost are all the labour and solicitude of the artist. In any case, therefore, I must have clung to some of these pygmy children of my pen, but (positively) quite a number of their original auditors have asked to have them reprinted. It amuses me to revive the old rubric—"published by request of friends"; and I respond with alacrity, lest the demand should be withdrawn.

If the complaint be made, on turning over these pages, that the general tone is "personal," again I cannot find an apology, except this, that the most divergent themes are comfortably studied only where there is consistency in their treatment. It would be disconcerting to believe

that a man of fair intelligence can be the incessant and insatiable reader of good books for fifty years without discovering some pathway through the maze. That pathway must be his personal response in vibration to the appeal of certain elements where he independently detects them.

E. G.

March 1921.

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THE LAST YEARS OF DISRAELI

THE LAST YEARS OF DISRAELI

ANY impatience which may have been felt by readers who have waited ten years, since the publication of Monypenny's first instalment of the biography of Disraeli, will cease when it is noted that by means of this delay Mr. Buckle has secured material of the first importance which would otherwise have been denied to him. The fifth and sixth volumes deal with the last thirteen years of the statesman's life, when the superficial aspect of the story was within the vision of most persons now middle-aged. What was not within that vision were the inner detail of his management of the Eastern question, his correspondence with Queen Victoria, and his intimate friendship with the Ladies Chesterfield and Bradford.

These three topics give an original and an absorbing interest to Mr. Buckle's new volumes, which, without these additions, they would not possess, and for these it would have been worth while to wait ten years more. Their value cannot be over-estimated. It is bare justice to Mr. Buckle to note that, with all this new material flung upon his shoulders, he has not been overwhelmed, but has pursued his biographical advance slowly and yet firmly to the close of one of the most romantic and amazing careers that the world has ever seen. If Disraeli is not now comprehended, it is no fault of his latest and best biographer, but resides in the native mystery of a man who was the Sphinx among his fellows.

The fifth volume opens in 1868, with the Irish Church and with Disraeli's tardily acknowledged sovereignty over the Tories in the following year. For me to discuss, ever so briefly, the political aspects of the narrative would be to waste time, for this is a matter in which I can pretend to no competency. Bright becomes dizzy and Dizzy becomes bright in this turning world of Parliament, but I must not presume to hold up the kaleidoscope. Enough in this short space if I dwell a little on two aspects, the literary and the personal. For my own part, the central entertainment of these last volumes gathers round what has been hitherto quite unsuspected by the public, the place held by two noble ladies in the life of the statesman, after Lady Beaconsfield's death in December 1872.

The Queen led the chorus of her people in her outspoken sympathy with Disraeli in "his first hour of desolation and overwhelming grief." These were not unmeaning words; the bereavement was all the more acutely felt because of his isolation in the midst of public affairs, and of the habit he had formed of immediate communion on all subjects with his wife. He wrote: "I owe everything to women; and if, in the sunset of life, I have still a young heart, it is due to that influence." He had reached his sixty-ninth year when he formed a fresh attachment, the record of which forms the most remarkable chapter of Mr. Buckle's book. La Rochefoucauld, whose knowledge of the human heart was usually profound, had said that "on ne revient guère de l'ambition à l'amour." He himself was a celebrated instance of the falsity of this statement, and Disraeli must now be added to those few who have taken the return journey from ambition to love.

The only element absent from this record of passion is the perhaps negligible one of youth, which was markedly missing on both sides. Disraeli, with a certain premonition, had laid it down in *Lothair* that three-score and ten

is the age of romantic passions. The ladies with whom he now fell violently in love—for there were two of them—were beautiful, high-born, discreet and tender, but neither would be called strictly youthful. The widowed Lady Chesterfield was his senior by two years, her still-married sister, Lady Bradford, was nearly sixty. Disraeli had known them for more than forty years, when, in 1873, he suddenly fell in love with them both at the same time. He proposed marriage to Lady Chesterfield in March 1874, but though, as the poet says, Euphemia served to grace his measure, Cloe was his real flame.

In wishing to marry Anne, Lady Chesterfield, whom he loved second-best, he evidently hoped to remove all objection to his constant companionship with Selina, Lady Bradford, whom he loved best of all. Marriage was refused him, but the intimacy continued to Disraeli's last hour, each of the ladies surviving him to the age of eighty. Their letters to him were, at their desire, destroyed at his death; his to them were kept, and to our great good fortune have been placed in Mr. Buckle's hands. They not merely preserve the minutest details of Disraeli's social and political experiences during the last eight years of his life, but they illuminate in the most engaging way sides of his character which would otherwise have remained obscure. No one will exhaustively comprehend the character of Disraeli, but we come nearer than ever before to solving the riddle when we study the Bradford-Chesterfield correspondence.

The course of true love did not run quite smoothly. Euphemia-Anne, though she would not marry him, accepted the elderly statesman's adoration without demur; but Cloe-Selina felt obliged to rebuff its embarrassing ardours. Tortured by her reserve, he threatened, at the very moment when he was steering the Public Worship Regulation Bill through the House of Commons, to fly for ever to some beautiful solitude to escape from his dark and harassing

existence. "I have lived," he, however, conceded, "to know that the twilight of love has its splendour and its richness," since Lady Bradford absolutely forbade him to stalk in its noontide sunshine. When he moderated the extravagance of his raptures, she accepted his service again, and he continued to be through all the crucial political crises her enamoured swain. In a moment of caprice, she told him he was a "humbug," but she knew very well that he was not that. What was he, this infatuated lover of seventy-two, who held the fortune of England in his hand?

He was evidently a man whose subtlety of intellect was equalled by the simplicity of his affections. When Lady Bradford ceased to be startled by the vehemence of Disraeli's language, she resigned herself to the charm of their delicate and beautiful relation. No one was scandalised by it; Queen Victoria, always inclined to be a prude, smiled upon it and protected it. There can be no question that Disraeli's daily conversations with his sensible and sympathetic friend illuminated his last years, and sent him down smiling to the grave. Mme. de Sévigné, who judges these things better than any one else, has said of a similar pair of elderly lovers, "Rien ne pouvait être comparé à la confiance et au charme de leur amitié." Selina, Lady Bradford, is a portrait added to the small and discreet gallery of women who have consoled the isolation of great public men by the intimate tenderness of their sympathy and their intelligence.

The space given to literature in the new volumes, though occasional, is important. It is occupied by *Lothair*, by the *General Preface* of 1870, by *Endymion*, and by a fragment, not hitherto reprinted, from "The Times," which has no title, but may be conveniently spoken of as *Falconet*. When Disraeli was turned out of office in 1868, twenty-two years had elapsed since the publication of his latest novel,

Tancred, but he had never ceased to think of himself as an author. Mr. Buckle confirms the delightful legend that he included Queen Victoria with himself as "we writers." His knowledge of English life in its most elaborate forms had expanded until no one was better fitted than he to give what Froude called a perfect representation of patrician society flourishing in its fullest bloom.

That society was in its most sumptuous and redundant flowerage just before the Franco-German War, and Disraeli proceeded to gather a bouquet of its splendid blossoms, merely, by a wave of his Oriental wizardry, turning its lilies into gardenias. His nosegay was *Lothair*, unquestionably the most opulent of his romances, and that which will go down to posterity as the most characteristic of his lavish genius. Mr. Buckle gives an admirable analysis of the book, and clears away any doubt which may have existed as to several of the modified portraits which it contains. I would remark, however, that he throws no light upon St. Aldegonde, one of the most amusing figures in the story; nor on Mr. Phœbus, in whom some features of Leighton may perhaps be discerned. Theodora and Clare are salient; the charming Corisande, on the contrary, seems to have no definite outline. Constant mockery of the "cumbrous" style of Mr. Gladstone, "so involved and infelicitous" in expression, offers evidence of the extreme attention which Gladstone's great rival paid to the technical part of writing. The early chapters of *Lothair* display the fact that Disraeli's pen was rusty from long disuse when he returned to imaginative authorship, but this was soon remedied, and the remainder of this novel is typical of the writer's complete mastery of a redundant, epigrammatical, and sonorous style.

Ten years later, and after incomparable public vicissitudes, he completed yet another great romance, *Endymion*, which appeared in November, 1880. He was now seventy-six

years of age, and all his mannerisms, both of character and style, had become fossilised. Although the remarkable interest which attaches to this book is patent, I cannot follow Mr. Buckle in all that he says of its positive merit. Meanwhile, I must, in parentheses, call attention to Mr. Norton Longmans' account of his visit to Hughenden to complete the arrangement by which his firm paid £10,000 for the copyright of *Endymion*. The diverting incident is inimitably told, and it is not merely amusing in itself, but it illustrates the mystery with which the venerable author now loved to drape the simplest arrangements of his existence.

The strange title of the novel is explained at last by Mr. Buckle, for Lord Rowton's statement that it was named after Endymion Porter, who was "apparently" an ancestor of Lady Beaconsfield, carried no conviction. Mr. Buckle most ingeniously infers that it was a kind of cryptic compliment to Selina, Lady Bradford, Endymion having been the infatuated lover of Selene the Moon. The novel is full of passages which only Disraeli would have written. His pomposity had now become a kind of conscious irony, as when, in writing to the Queen, he called the public-houses of the North of London the "gorgeous palaces of Geneva." It is not the excess of this verbiage which fatigues the reader of *Endymion*, but rather an exhaustion of the author's imaginative redundancy. It is doubtless a symptom of this decline in invention which makes *Endymion* fuller than any other of his novels of crude and palpable "portraits" of prominent people.

There remains the fragment which I have dared to christen *Falconet*, the ten existing chapters of which form a most welcome appendix to Volume V. It is Mr. Buckle's opinion that this was started directly Disraeli had finished *Endymion*, that is to say, late in 1880. Mr. Buckle's

knowledge cannot be challenged, but in this case does he know? He gives no documentary evidence whatever for his statement. In the absence of direct knowledge, I am inclined to doubt the fact. *Falconet* is, in every respect, in style, in character-painting, in congruity, superior to *Endymion*. The attempt to sketch the career of a species of Gladstone, seen through Disraelian spectacles, promised to be as brilliant as anything in *Lothair*, and is started with even greater sobriety and vigour than the beginning of that novel. I hazard the belief that if *Falconet* had been continued, it might have been Disraeli's masterpiece.

In *Endymion*, to my mind, there are many evidences of waning power, if not of senility; in *Falconet* there are none. Indeed, were it not for a direct reference to *Lothair*, possibly introduced as an afterthought, I should conjecture that the former was written early in 1869, in response to the suggestion made to him by a publisher immediately on his resignation. This, however, is an enigma that Mr. Buckle alone, if any one, can solve, and I hope he will indulge us with his authority for dating *Falconet* so late as the end of 1880. If he is correct, it is only one more instance of that extraordinary revival of imagination in great writers in far-advanced years, of which there are several instances in literary history.

I quit Mr. Buckle's fascinating volumes without having touched on all that makes them of deep political importance, but the cobbler must stick to his last.

BOYTHORN IN THE FLESH

BOYTHORN IN THE FLESH

"THERE'S no simile for his lungs. Talking, laughing, or snoring, they make the beams of the house shake." So said Mr. Jarndyce, leaning back to enjoy the image of his friend Mr. Laurence Boythorn, in the immortal pages of *Bleak House*. Disputes may arise as to who was and who was not "meant" by this or that figure in fiction; but no one—not Dickens, nor Forster, nor Landor himself—ever questioned that Boythorn was a studied portrait of Walter Savage Landor. I find on my table a *Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse* of that voluminous author, in which Mr. Thomas J. Wise and Mr. Stephen Wheeler, specialists of high repute, have produced a treasure-house of things rare and new. It is issued for the Bibliographical Society, and can be purchased from that excellent body for one guinea. It contains a frontispiece, I think hitherto unpublished, in which the amazing Landor sits exactly as Boythorn sat, "with his head thrown back like an old soldier, his stalwart chest squared, his hands like a clean blacksmith's;" no one could look more gallant, more absurd, or more extraordinary.

What he was in physique he was in intellect and imagination: inconceivably boisterous, as soft as a turtle-dove, chivalrously polite, preposterously insolent, passionately voluble, obstinately silent. Landor was Boythorn translated into literature, expressing the most implacable sentiments in a voice of thunder which failed to disturb the very small canary perched above his forehead. The man was not more curious than his writings, and indeed

the writings *are* the man. Exactly as they are we conceive him. Resonant, vehement and tender, they are full of extravagance and inequality, but their merits are extreme and their very absurdities prepossessing. Yet Landor is of unquestioned English classics probably the least known.

The bibliography compiled by Mr. Wise and Mr. Wheeler, a monument of elegant industry, suggests certain reasons for this partial and relative neglect. One is the characteristic way in which Landor wrote and published his compositions. It was part of his idiosyncrasy to think himself so certain of the approval of posterity that he took no pains whatever to present his writings to the public in any rational or consistent form. Again, falling in his prolonged and angry old age into extreme poverty in exile, the task of editing his works was left to John Forster, who was not sure of his own legal position in the matter, nor conveniently prepared for the laborious task of collecting the poems and pamphlets which Landor had so long been flinging upon the winds.

A third reason, of course, was the peculiar flavour of Landor's work in prose and verse, a taste for which has to be acquired, like that for olives or for some *crus* of Burgundy, the aroma surrounding them being infinitely attractive to a few *gourmets*, but not popular, nor easily affected, even by those who wish to be thought connoisseurs. Moreover, Forster, who had great merits as a friend, neglected in this instance to exercise them. He drove, with a strange and vehement jealousy, all competitors forth from a field which he would share with none, and yet he carried out the task with the utmost indifference and slackness. He edited the "works" of Landor in seven casual volumes, omitting a large proportion of the minor writings, and then sat down to guard the copyright, as if all were for the best in the best of all possible editorial

worlds. The result is that Landor is the one great English writer who has never been "collected."

The collecting of him has been rendered for the first time possible by the enthusiasm of Messrs. Wise and Wheeler, in whose hands it is not a word too much to say that Landor starts upon a new lease of existence. As they point out, the fact that no public library in the United Kingdom contains all or nearly all Landor's published writings, affords by itself a criterion of the obstacles which had to be surmounted in producing a mere list of them. In a surprising number of cases only one copy seems to have survived, and there are five works, known to have been published, of which the editors have been unable to discover a single example. This, I suppose, is a case unparalleled in our literature for the last two centuries. The lost works are *Sponsalia Polyxenæ*, a Latin poem published at Pistoja (of all places!) in 1819; a pamphlet addressed, no one knows when, to the Burgesses of Warwick; two poems, issued together in 1852; a small prose volume called *Letters of a Canadian*, published in 1862; and another paper of poem-twins of unknown date. Any one casually lighting upon any of these will be like a sportsman who penetrates the brushwood of New Zealand and stalks a living moa. But people who *will* publish their works in Pistoja and Warwick and Pisa are wilfully laying a trap for oblivion.

A considerable number of Landor's shorter works were published at Bath, and all these have become very rare. When Sir Sidney Colvin wrote his admirable *Life* in 1881, he was obliged to state his conviction that not a single copy of one of them, the *Simonidea*, of 1806, had been preserved. Few books have been searched for more assiduously than this, with the result that eight copies are now known to exist. The contents, mainly in English, but some in Latin verse, prove interesting and valuable. Addresses to

the famous "Ianthè" (Sophia Jane Swift) appeared in *Simonidea* for the first time, and she is doubtless "the woman who loved me" who marked with a pencil those of his MSS. which she wished to form this volume. The most hardened scoffer at bibliography will admit that this was a book which could not be allowed to disappear. It is not so with all the rarities. There would be many a dry eye if the *Poche Osservazioni* of 1821, a solitary copy of which exists in the British Museum, were to vanish altogether. A tendency to print needless "osservazioni" was one of Landor's weaknesses.

The bibliographical life of our author is divided into sections, the first of which ranges from *The Poems of Walter Savage Landor* in 1795 to *Count Julian* in 1812. With the exception of one or two pamphlets and the Latin *Idyllia Heroica*, there is here a complete break in Landor's ardent and voluble publications until 1824, when the *Imaginary Conversations* began to take their course. Landor had devoted himself to the writing of tragedy, in which he believed that he had "at last acquired the right tone, and was treading down at heel the shoes of Alfieri." But the Longmans refusing to publish one of his plays, even at the author's cost, Landor flew into one of his towering passions, and committed *Ferranti and Giulio* to the flames. *Count Julian* was happily saved, but another torrent of passion sent the comedy of *The Charitable Dowager* to destruction, and Landor, at the age of thirty-seven, solemnly renounced verse-publication for ever. He had tried to attract notice as a poet, and (he declared) had failed; he "laid down the burden" of authorship and "abandoned its tissue of humiliations."

Of course, this was a lover's vow, only made to be broken, but it is a fact that he printed no new English verse of the least importance until 1834, when he included a large number of lyrics in the prose *Citation of William Shake-*

speare. He wrote a good deal of dramatic verse, of which *Andrea of Hungary*, in 1839, is an example; but he destroyed much more than he preserved. The reference to Alfieri in the letter I have just quoted is curious, because the close parallelism between Landor and his Italian predecessor seems to have escaped attention. Alfieri's tragedies, which are no longer read, appear to have been Landor's model, and they have the same hard conciseness and what Matthew Arnold called "narrow elevation" as his. The personal character of Alfieri, with his stoical and yet romantic passion, had points of close similarity to that of Landor.

The productions of the first period, of which I have spoken, are specially calculated to attract the collector, who, as the accepted favourites of the auction-room become more and more difficult to secure at a price which is not prohibitive, ought to be looking out for pastures new. With Messrs. Wise and Wheeler's fascinating quarto before me, I urge upon budding bibliophiles the cultivation of Landor, and especially of his first period. It contains twelve items, all of which are rare, and several practically unattainable. But what exercise can be more fascinating than to hunt in the gardens of the booksellers for such blue roses as the *Simonidea*, or the *Commentary on C. J. Fox* (1812), of which one copy is known, or the *Iambi* of 1800, or the *Moral Epistle to Earl Stanhope* (1795), which even the British Museum does not possess? Not quite so rare as these, and intrinsically far more interesting, are the *Gebir* of 1798, the *Poems from the Arabic and Persian* of 1800, and the odes *Ad Gustavum* of 1810. These are hidden, like enchanted queens, in secret places, but gold, that insidious magician, may not impossibly reveal them to the man who waits patiently enough.

The purpose and value of the writings of Landor were long misinterpreted and neglected. This was especially the

case with his poetry, of the reviewers of which he said in his vivid way that they were like mischievous boys crushing with a garden-roller a whole bed of crocuses. In order to remedy a neglect which has been largely redeemed, since Sir Sidney Colvin's biography, by various isolated writers, but which is still far too general, we ought first of all to be able to refer to as much of Landor's surviving work as possible. Strange to say, after the lapse of several generations, no complete edition of his verse has ever been issued, nor do those collections which exist give the biographical and bibliographical notes which are needful for the comprehension of the reader. Will no one undertake for Landor the task which has been carried out by Buxton Forman for Shelley and Keats, by Lord Ernle for Byron, and by Mr. Lucas for Lamb? The perusal of the bibliography before me leads to the conviction that this is one of the most urgent needs of English literature at this moment, since Landor has been the most cynically neglected of all our great national writers.

Examples of this neglect occur in such unexpected places that one is tempted to believe that the ghost of Walter Savage Landor is afflicted with the Evil Eye. No one seems to approach him without turning head over heels. Messrs. Wise and Wheeler give a series of amusing, but highly disconcerting examples of the persistent misquotation from which he suffers. One of the first critics of our time represents Landor as saying that the Evening Star was "overheard," when it was merely "overhead," and that the sorceress in *Gebir* complained of her "rights," instead of her "rites," being divulged. Another editor presented an "ebbing sun" beating upon the shore; but Landor wrote an "ebbing sea." After these, texts which print "insincerity" for "sincerity" and "destruction" for "conservation" seem merely impish. But Oxford will certainly take note of an appendix to Messrs. Wise and

Wheeler's bibliography, in which the accuracy of the *Historical English Dictionary* is very seriously taken to task. They say that, for the purposes of that standard work, the writings of Landor have been "read with an amazing indifference to details."

A great many of the errors which they print in crue sequence are probably due to the fact that the helper who undertook to search for words in Landor used the two-volume edition of the *Works* of 1846, which teems with mistakes. The edition of 1876 is that which is nearest to completeness and accuracy. If the Oxford lexicographer had referred to this it would have saved him from a long list of inexactitudes, and would have enriched the dictionary with such pleasing words as "obstreperance," "lilihood," and "dystheists," which he appears to have overlooked. But Landor has not yet had the care applied to his text which so great a master of our language demands, and after the publication of this meticulous bibliography there is no longer an excuse for neglect.

THE ARISTOCRAT IN LITERATURE

THE ARISTOCRAT IN LITERATURE

If ever a man was born with a gold spoon in his mouth, that man was George Wyndham. All the good fairies gathered round his cradle, and not one went away without leaving a rich gift behind her. He came of high and ancient lineage, without being hampered by rank; he was surrounded by all that money can supply, but without the burden of excess of wealth; his physical beauty was remarkable; his temperament was genial and generous; he desired to please, and found it only too easy to do so. He had all the accomplishments, all the graces, and a brain so well balanced that in the midst of his fascination he preserved his judgment.

He moved like a greyhound among those heavy beasts of burden, our politicians. He flashed about our social and public life in such a luminous mist that his real nature has never been precisely understood, and since his death a flow of adulation, some of it very irritating, has threatened to make comprehension impossible.

But George Wyndham's amazing luck persists. He has now found for his literary executor the very individual who, if any one can, should make his character intelligible. Mr. Charles Whibley, who edits these *Essays in Romantic Literature* (Macmillans), is one of the soundest critics of letters whom we possess. His opinion is founded on a lifelong study of the craft; it is rooted in the humanities, ancient and modern. The forty pages of his introduction

present for Wyndham's immortality a plea the skill of which is almost concealed by its gravity and adroitness. Mr. Whibley neither protests too much nor repels by excess of praise. Those whom certain hysterical effusions have disgusted must revise their prejudice in this clear and level light.

The essays here collected represent, in the main, the literary work of Wyndham's life, and we have to reflect that, though he strove hard to keep them from being desultory, they are, in fact, brief and isolated. It seems that he designed a great book on romance; Mr. Whibley prints the scenario, of which about half exists in the volume before us. The rest was never written, and we are, therefore, called upon to give very high rank to the author of six or seven glowing chapters, which, it must be admitted, have little relation with one another. There is no thesis, no general trend of argument in Wyndham's work. It reminds us of the undergraduate's essay, of which Jowett said, "Very clever, but you don't seem following any particular line of thought!" It is full of emotion and ornament; it is felicitous in expression, and chivalrous in sentiment, but it does not make any strong impact on the attention.

Henley, whose action on the mind of Wyndham was salutary, warned him of his weakness: "You are all for altisonancy and colour," he protested. When Wyndham set out for Alexandria in 1885, he said he felt like "Antony going to Egypt in a purple-sailed galley," and all through his writings we feel too vividly the flapping of the purple sail upon a gilded mast.

Mr. Whibley is so crafty in defence that he rarely gives the devil's advocate a chance, but he leaves a loophole on the page which he dedicates to Wyndham's account of Villon. We smile when Mr. Whibley remarks that Wyndham describes the "shames" of Villon's life without "a

hint of irrelevant censure," but we weep when he goes on to call R. L. Stevenson's essay on that poet "a sad aberration in criticism."

Long ago, Gaston Paris had remarked on the extraordinary indulgence which all English critics showed to Villon's adventures, and when Stevenson, a little later, wrote his criticism, he, for the first time in English, distinguished the poet from the malefactor. In my judgment, nothing in Stevenson's analysis of Villon's character was incorrect, although, perhaps, a little juvenile in expression. The genius of Villon was beautiful, his character was detestable, and why the latter quality should not be honestly acknowledged, I fail to comprehend.

Villon was a very great poet; he was also a rogue and a robber, who committed murder too often for the occurrence to be an accident. There is absolutely nothing in his obscure and criminal record which is to be admired, except its picturesqueness. It was characteristic of Wyndham that the picturesqueness overweighed all other considerations, and this leads us to his main romantic fallacy—the confusion of æsthetic passion with moral energy.

When we seek for the reason why George Wyndham, with all his elegance and charm, failed to make a deep impression on his time, we find ourselves face to face with insoluble private problems. But we can at least attempt to examine his technical characteristics. He took pains, in the intervals between riding to hounds and addressing the House of Commons, to write well. Mr. Whibley gives a most interesting account of the mode in which, in 1892, he began to serve a "rigid apprenticeship to literature," and above all to study prose under the guidance of Henley.

I can supply a little note of still earlier date. In 1889, when for a short time I was editing a certain magazine, George Wyndham sent me a poem. I could not publish

his verses, but I asked him to write a prose study for me. He was very modest about his incapacity, but he was persuaded to try, and he produced an excellent article, which was revised (I may be so indiscreet as to add) by a very eminent personage indeed. This essay was, or I am much mistaken, the earliest of George Wyndham's published writings, and he wrote it with noticeable care.

If some reserve seems called for in dealing with George Wyndham's charming studies in chivalrous romance, it is mainly on what may be called ethical grounds. He did not realise how much strength and body are added to a man's work by its being firmly based on moral principle. He was a fairy born before the Christian era; "he looked with wonder upon the world," as Mr. Whibley says, and it was never quite a real world to him. The consequence was that, passionately as he loved books, they were never quite real books; they were liable to turn into dry leaves when Titania rode by.

The essays now collected have an element of fairy sadness in them, because of this light hold of their delightful writer upon the basal facts of life. We read in the great chorus of "Hellas" that "Pan and Love, and even Olympian Jove, grew weak when killing Truth had glared on them." George Wyndham thought that by putting up a screen between the antagonists he could worship Pan and Love, and Truth as well. It was a gallant effort.

A FRENCHMAN OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

A FRENCHMAN OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

LATIN having been cultivated, since the Middle Ages, almost exclusively for instruction and very little for pleasure, the schoolmaster has inevitably come to be the arbiter of what shall or shall not be read. It is perfectly natural that those who teach a language should wish the attention of those who are taught to be concentrated on what is purest in grammar, on what, in fact, is the normal standard. In consequence, the reading of late Latin authors, even of the Silver Age, has been discouraged, and of those subsequent to what is known as "classical Latin" almost forbidden.

But the collapse of the ancient world is intensely interesting, and its literary records full of entertainment. To stop at Tacitus and Statius is like stopping at Gibbon and Goldsmith, and it is rather irritating to be told that Ausonius or Tennyson is "decadent." The admirable Loeb Library, which fishes in all the waters of antiquity, has responded to a natural curiosity, and presents us with a text of Ausonius, excellently edited and translated by Mr. H. G. E. White. That Mr. White cannot resist a little denigration of his subject, and cannot persuade himself to realise what poetry meant in the fourth century, does not lessen our gratitude for his elegant and painstaking edition.

In the Roman world three hundred years after the birth of Christ literature in prose and verse was very widely

cultivated, and towards the middle of the century Ausonius had become unquestionably the most eminent of living writers. This does not prove him a great author, but at least it makes him an object of interesting speculation. He was a pure Frenchman by both parents; he was born at Bordeaux about 310; he was educated at Toulouse and returned to Bordeaux as a professor. After thirty years of class-teaching he was appointed tutor to the future Emperor Gratian, and honours were heaped upon him. After the success of the rebellion of Maximus he went back unharmed to Bordeaux, where he lived very cosily, and died at the age of over eighty.

The author of *The Decline and Fall* has dictatorially put it that "the poetical fame of Ausonius condemns the taste of his age." Perhaps it does, but in spite of the taste of his age, Ausonius is an extremely captivating figure. For one thing, he proves that the age appreciated literature, since purely on the score of his intellectual attainments this middle-class Frenchman rose to the highest honours in the Roman State. For another thing, while his inequality as a poet is obvious, I do not know how imaginative beauty can be denied to his best verses. Of his idyll, *Cupid Crucified* (which was translated by Thomas Stanley in the seventeenth century), Mr. White has not a kind word to say. It seems to me, in spite of its blemishes, like one of the lovely Pagan designs that Italian draughtsmen of a thousand years later loved to draw and paint. Mr. Mackail, the one critic who has done justice to Ausonius, praises his "modernism" and his "classic beauty" in terms which I modestly commend to the attention of Mr. White.

Ausonius is the only ancient poet whose daily life we can closely follow. Pedants have reproved him for being so chatty about himself, but I adore him for it. I find in his diffuse *Ephemeris* something of the delightful

garrulity of Montaigne, who was a Gascon, like himself. Ausonius is wide-awake sooner than his valet, who has to be roused by a shout and ordered to bring the poet his slippers and his lawn tunic. The poet is in too great a hurry to eat his slice of honey-cake, a refreshment which answered, I suppose, to our bedside cup of tea. While his servant is putting out his clothes, Ausonius washes and says his prayers, not very warmly, for after a long orthodox outpouring, he artlessly exclaims, "Well, that's enough prayer to God!" (*satis precum datum deo*), and hurries out to interview the cook. Ausonius has a luncheon party to-day, six persons, including the host, and he is anxious that it should go off well. Then, having settled the order of the dishes, he hastens away to his library, breathlessly, for Ausonius is always in a hurry. He summons his secretary, whom he charges to write with rapidity while he dictates a set of verses. Then follows luncheon, and when the guests are gone, after a delicate meal (Sosias, the cook, has dipped his fingers in the sauce and sucked them to make sure of the flavour), Ausonius goes back to his books, and, when dusk is coming on and he can see to read no longer, he walks in his garden in the exquisite Aquitanian twilight, and then dedicates an hour to reflection under the boughs of his vast elm-tree. Then to bed, with a good conscience, and a hope that his slumber will not be vexed by evil dreams. How un-Latin this picture is, and how French! We feel that another civilisation than that of Rome is setting in, and that the ancient world has ended.

In the museum at Trèves there is to be seen a bas-relief representing a wine-boat on the Moselle, carrying four huge casks and a crew of eight persons. This precious remnant may belong to the fourth century, and may illustrate contemporaneously a passage in the best surviving poem of Ausonius, the *Mosella*. When his pupil

Valentinian I. entered Germany in triumph, he appointed his old teacher professor in Trèves, and Ausonius burst into trills of grateful song. He celebrated the emperors and Trèves itself and Bissula, a fair Boche damsel who was assigned to him as part of the loot, but most loudly of all he celebrated the river Moselle, its wines, its fish, its trade, and superlatively its landscape.

There are but few descriptive poems in Latin literature. It is true that, "as every schoolboy knows," Horace takes us very dryly to Brindisi, but it is rarely that we get anything but the baldest summary of facts. The Latins were not interested in natural scenery, with the solitary exception of Ausonius, to whom, it seems to me, Mr. White is sadly grudging of praise, although he has translated the *Mosella* with so much taste and care. When we speak of Ausonius, we ought not to be thinking of Wordsworth or any romantic nature-poet; if we must have a parallel, let it be Pope, whose brilliant and conventional description of the Thames, in *Windsor Forest*, seems to me like, but not nearly so good as, Ausonius' description of the Moselle.

Mr. White is haunted by the sense that Ausonius was "unappreciative of the human sympathy which should pervade true poetry," and he is for ever scolding his subject for being "barren of ideas" and destitute "of a gleam of insight or of broad human sympathy." This censure seems to me quite out of place, and to be founded on the romantic fallacy so common in recent criticism. Apple-trees are reproved for not producing peaches, and the critic does not trouble to ask whether the apples are good of their kind. Mr. White is so completely dominated by his romanticism that he is unable to see how precious are the indications of family life given in the little medallions of his relatives in the *Parentalia*, where Ausonius warbles about his brothers-in-law and his grandfather and his maiden aunts, those "avowed virgins" Hilaria and

Dryadia, Cataphronia and Veneria. (Ausonius had a larger number of aunts than any other person whom I recall in literary history, except the poet Gray.)

Mr. White wants everything in poetry to be loftily sentimental, but poets belong to their epochs, and the fourth century in the Empire was not given to sentimentality. What is remarkable about Ausonius is a quality for which Mr. White has not a word to spare, sensitiveness. His nerves are wide awake and ready to respond to every appeal of sight or sound or touch. To call him "rhetorical" is merely to employ a phrase; the author of the exquisite observations in the *Mosella*, which even Mr. White is forced to admit are happy, was much more than a rhetor; he was occasionally a poet of a very delicate order, who obeyed the call of his age, and who has left us an imperfect but exquisite impression of its range of taste. Mr. White, who is a learned grammarian and a scholar of high distinction, must forgive me, who am neither, for taking into consideration, what grammarians dislike to consider, the amount of relative enjoyment to be found in the writings of the best authors of a bad period.

The fourth century was a happy hunting-ground for rhetoricians, and they flourished throughout Gaul. Ausonius gives us amusing particulars of his own education, superintended by his uncle Arborius, a great rhetorical big-wig in Bordeaux. In later life he celebrated nearly fifty of his professors in a cycle of lyrics; Bordeaux was evidently delivered up bound into the hands of the grammarians. All unconscious of the coming cloud of Visigoths, the professors drank claret, and played backgammon, and expounded Quintilian in speeches which were "like a torrent in full spate, yet one that whirled down pure gold without muddy sentiment." Ausonius disliked the Greek language, which was patiently instilled into him by three worthy Hellenists. No hint of punishment or puerile

restraint is hinted at; Ausonius always had a very good time. One of his teachers was called "The Lascivious," in jest; "though the name was a libel on his upright life, he never forbade its use, because he knew it amused his friends' ears." A delightful, easy-going world of Bordeaux, in its glass-house, just before the storm of the Barbarians.

Mr. White promises another volume of Ausonius, but I do not know how he will fill it. Most of the poet's works must have been lost, and we need not bewail them. There exist his *Epigrams*, which have been praised, and which were admirably translated into French by a lover of the Silver Age, Rémy de Gourmont. There exist the *Epistles*, twenty-five in number. What else there may be I do not know, but evidently what is essential is to be found in the present volume.

'THE DIALL OF PRINCES'

'THE DIALL OF PRINCES'

THE original author of *The Diall of Princes*, Don Antonio de Guevara, Bishop of Guadix and official chronicler to the Spanish King Charles V., was a Franciscan monk who took a very prominent part in the revival of letters at the beginning of the fifteenth century. His fame, during his lifetime—and, indeed, for a long time after his death in 1545—was European. Students of Spanish literature have remarked with surprise, without being able to explain the fact, that while writers such as Villalobos and Oliva, whom Spaniards declare to be the witty pioneers of the rejection of Latin in favour of an elegant Castilian, were from the very first totally unknown outside Spain, Guevara, who was no wittier or wiser than they, enjoyed universal popularity abroad. There are these puzzling inequalities in human fortune, and it is often not easy to account for them.

Guevara was the contemporary of Erasmus and Macchiavelli and Rabelais. These authors still enjoy an immortality of fame. Although they may not be read every day of the week by a frivolous generation, still, there they are; they are quite alive, whereas Guevara, who was their rival in their own countries, and who seemed destined to outlive them all, has long been dead.

This may seem an ungracious way of welcoming a new venture which is admirably presented to us by Mr. K. N. Colvile, but the fact is that whether Guevara is dead or alive has little to do with our interest in North's *Diall of Princes*. The *Reloj* (Mr. Colvile prefers the older form

of "Relox") *de Principes*, which was brought out in folio in 1529, was Guevara's longest and most important venture. He had already published, in 1527, *The Golden Book of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, which anticipated the *Reloj*, and heralded its popularity.

Both these works were received, as I have said, with rapture, but probably not much read in Spanish outside Spain. Twelve years after Guevara's death an English admirer wrote that "by his staid life God hath been glorified, by his wholesome doctrine the people of Spain heretofore, and by his sweet and savoury writings we and sundry other nations at this present, may be much profited." The writer of this sentence, which is highly characteristic of Guevara's foreign reputation, is believed to have known little Spanish, but to have read his author in a rather loose French translation.

Meanwhile it would appear that the enormous fame of Guevara was already sapped in Spain, where the *Reloj* was attacked as not being what it pretended to be—a translation of a Greek manuscript in the Florentine Library. Professor Fitzmaurice-Kelly (whose name I am surprised not to find mentioned anywhere by Mr. Colvile) tells us that this discovery brought Guevara into trouble with a variety of antagonists, and particularly with the Court-Fool, who seems to have "unmasked the imposture with malignant astuteness." In England and France and Italy, however, people knew nothing of all this—and, indeed, as *The Diall of Princes* was treated as a romance, why should they? What interest for us the book possesses depends upon its place and influence, in its purely English form, in the development of English prose.

The original English edition—a perfect terror to the indolent—contains, we are told, "1,000 small quarto pages of very closely set black-letter type." Not only must Mr. Colvile be the only person now living who has read it

through, but it is amazing that three centuries ago it should have been not merely read, but eagerly and enthusiastically devoured. It is usually called a novel, but it would be almost as appropriate to call Butler's *Analogy* a romance. The author takes the speeches and letters of Marcus Aurelius point by point, and develops them with long, winding arguments and stately illustration. The only excuse for calling the book a "novel" is that a great part of it is written in the form of a dialogue with a lady called Faustine. This represents in the mind of Guevara the Empress Faustina Annia, who rewarded ill the long-suffering of her philosophical husband. In the so-called romance the lady holds her own in argument very well, the Emperor losing his temper with her a little, but never going so far as to say, with a later poet,

> "Even He who cast seven devils out
> Of Magdalene
> Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
> For you, Faustine."

Mr. Colvile mercifully spares us the entire "romance," but has picked out copious passages, which he has arranged in an anthology of 250 pages—quite enough to give the most exacting reader an impression of a curious but interminable book.

At the time when, as was said a hundred years later, "scarce any book except the Bible was so much translated or so frequently printed" as the *Reloj*, Guevara occupied the time and care of at least five or six English translators. Of these two were Lord Berners and, later, Sir Thomas North, each of them prominent in the development of English prose in the middle of the sixteenth century. Both of these men translated, not from the original, but from the French, although Sir Thomas North is believed to have made some reference to the Spanish. When the latter translated the *Reloj*, of which Mr. Colvile here gives

us so serviceable a contraction, North was a young man of twenty-two; he had not arrived at that mastery of the new English which he afterwards showed in his magnificent version of Amyot's *Plutarch*, which has been universally admired for its racy and vivid picturesqueness. Sir Thomas North enjoys the honour of having influenced Shakespeare's style more certainly than any other author. In *Antony and Cleopatra* and in *Coriolanus* the poet has paid North the compliment of borrowing considerable passages from his *Plutarch* with hardly the change of a word. What a debt we all owe to North is well brought out by George Wyndham in his eloquent preface to the six volumes in the "Tudor Translations" edition of 1895.

The version of the *Reloj* does not offer quite the same attraction, partly because Guevara was a writer infinitely inferior to Plutarch, with nothing of his liveliness and charm, and partly because North had, in 1557, not attained the vigour of style which he exercised a quarter of a century later. Still, *The Diall of Princes*, which has never until now been reprinted in modern times, has great interest from the point of view of the breaking away of English prose from its mediæval bondage, and Mr. Colvile deserves our thanks for restoring it to us in a shape which renders it possible for a modern reader to study it.

Thomas North's long and sumptuous Dedication to Mary, "by the grace of God Queen of England, Spain, France, both Sicilies, Jerusalem, Naples, and Ireland," is an excellent example of what prose had come to be, at its best, by the middle of the sixteenth century.

Lord Berners, who must certainly be greeted as the earliest writer of modern English prose (if any one doubts it, let him but compare the periods of Lord Berners with those of any other of the successors of Caxton), was now dead, and the impulse he had given to the cultivation of a purer and brighter style had not been taken up, or at

least no evidence of such a revival had been printed. But in 1553 came Wilson's *Art of Rhetorique*, our earliest example of deliberate literary criticism. North, though he acted in complete opposition to Wilson's charge to English writers not to "powder their talk with overseas language," was probably stirred by the *Art of Rhetorique*. At all events, he was to be the leader of the new prose, and in that connection his early experience with *The Diall of Princes* has a great deal of value for us.

Mr. Colvile enters at considerable length into the question whether the translations of Sir Thomas North had an encouraging effect upon the very curious ornateness which was to fall upon English prose, almost like an infectious disease, during the next generation, and to be called "Euphuism" from the popular moral romance of Lyly. The subject is one which is too elaborate to be gone into here, but for my own part I see very little trace of *The Diall of Princes* on the texture of *Euphues*. The sententious moralisings of North's translation, his excessive use of antithesis, are found, of course, in Lyly, but they were the habit of the age. The new spirit expressed itself in this form, which seems cumbrous and tedious to us, but which fascinated readers in the reign of the Tudor monarchs. On the other hand, what is properly called "Euphuism":—

> "Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies,
> Playing with words and idle similes,"

is not at all characteristic of North. But this is a matter which cannot be conveniently treated here.

A word must be said about "The Scholar's Library," of which this is the first instalment. I wish it all good luck under its present editor. Its object seems to be to reprint such works as are well known by name, but which, from one cause or another, have escaped republication. The truth is, these are no longer very numerous, and the books

now promised are scattered over a wide field. I am glad to see that the Plays of Nicholas Rowe are included; I do not think that Rowe has been edited since the eighteenth century. Weever's *Funeral Monuments* is a curious and valuable work, now scarce in its original form. But I would suggest to the editor of "The Scholar's Library" that *A Selection from the Prose Writings of John Donne* is superfluous, after the anthology so skilfully made by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith.

'THE HIERARCHIE OF ANGELS'

'THE HIERARCHIE OF ANGELS'

THROUGH the kindness of the executors of a friend my library is enriched by a valuable memorial of him. Robert Ross, who died in his sleep one night in October, 1918, dwells in the thoughts of a multitude of men and women who feel life emptier for his absence. His character, which was a very strange one, invites analysis, but may easily evade it. There was something of Don Quixote in him, and a little of Malvolio; he was "misplaced in Illyria," as Charles Lamb would say. He loved to support lost causes and to advance paradoxical opinions; his mind was almost always out of key with the age we live in. He had a passionate horror of injustice, and a wild determination to correct it, without any counting of the cost. The result was that he suffered much, and perhaps he was even the innocent cause of some suffering to others. If I mention this, it is because it was matter of general knowledge, and because I mean never to refer to it again. These electric storms die down into silence in the tomb.

Robert Ross was not essentially a writer, although twelve years ago he published a volume of whimsical essays called *Masques and Faces*, parts of which are sparkling with wit, while other parts are rather poor. He was not, in the first instance, a writer, but a talker. Conversation was the natural medium of communication with him, and in the rapidity of his mental movement, his fantastic flights of paradox, and the astonishing breadth of his knowledge, he was highly remarkable. During a general onset of talk he would be, hat in hand, at first a smiling

and dangerous listener, whose acquiescence was "too good to be true." With attentive affability he would allow the fabric of assumption to reach its height, and then destroy it with a single stroke. What, however, will be remembered longest is not his laughter, nor his easy erudition, nor even his extravagant ideals, but his quixotry of self-denying generosity. He wore himself out in deeds of active kindness. He was disinterested almost to excess, and indefatigable in practical beneficence. He was a finished expert in several arts, but especially in the art of benevolence.

But, to turn from Robert Ross to his bequest, the book which I now hold in remembrance of him is a very fine copy of a folio which is rarely met with in good condition. It is the first (and only) edition of Heywood's elephantine epic, *The Hierarchie of Angels*, published in 1635. The author, who has rather infelicitously been called our "prose Shakespeare," was probably over the age of sixty when he wrote it. The dates of Heywood's birth and death are unknown; but he was a Lincolnshire man, educated at Cambridge, and perhaps a fellow of Peterhouse, who came up to London about the year 1600, and immediately plunged into such a riot of composition as was never known before or since. He wrote for the stage, and his *A Woman Kill'd with Kindness* and *The English Traveller* are still admired; but the appalling fact is that by 1633 he had "had either an entire hand, or at least a main finger" in more than 220 plays! Where is your Lope de Vega now? Most providentially, about two hundred of these dramas have been lost, and I earnestly hope that they may never be found, not because those that remain are not interesting, but because we may have too much of a good thing. Later on, like many other seventeenth-century wits, Heywood seems to have become pious, and to have grown ashamed of play-writing, but

the madness of the pen was still on him, and he composed epics, essays, translations with frightful industry. He was full of talent, with a spark of genius, but it was his cardinal fault to be intolerably chatty.

Apart from his dramas, *The Hierarchie of Angels* is Heywood's most valuable contribution to literature. It was produced "regardless of expense," with full-page plates, the engraving of which was paid for by infatuated patrons. No one in the seventeenth century or since has had the courage to reprint an epic which runs to the formidable bulk of 622 pages; and therefore to the student of our poetry this text of 1635 is particularly valuable. We get into the habit of regarding *Paradise Lost* as a solitary monster, as the only religious epic in the language. But it is merely the best—by far and beyond approach the best. *The Hierarchie of Angels* is a poem on the same scale as Milton's, written more or less with the same purpose—that is to say, to give an artistic rendering to Biblical theology. Indeed, Heywood's subject, although nominally "the names, orders, and offices of the blessed Angels," prominently includes "the fall of Lucifer with *his* Angels," than which nothing could be more Miltonic.

It was the weakness of all the narrative poets of the earlier part of the seventeenth century to dissolve into rigmarole, but there is none of them more disjointed and discursive than Heywood. He cannot keep to his point, and the irritated reader sometimes wonders whether he was conscious of any point to keep to. He divides his poem into nine books, which he calls "Tractats," and he names each "Tractat" after a heavenly domination. But he gets lost in interminable wanderings, and when we expect to be told about "The Cherubim," we are put off with the Manichees, and why Christ was "typically figured in Aaron," and what Athenodorus "was wont to say," and what happened to Dercillides "being sent of an

Embassy to King Pyrrhus." It is useless to look for a guiding thread; we can but lean back with hands folded and let Heywood carry us along in his enchanted boat, without a course, without a star, but driven by his melody, which is often considerable. He is particularly happy in a rush of fine words, such as this, which deals with the magical property of gems:—

> "Unto the Sun the Carbuncle is due,
> And Hyacinth of colour, green and blue;
> Adamant and Chrystall to the Queen of Night;
> To Saturn, Onyx, and the Chrysolite;
> The Sapphire with the Diamond to Jove;
> The Jasper and the Magnet Mars doth love;
> Smaragd and Sardyx Venus doth not hate,
> Nor Mercury the Topaz and Achate."

For "hyacinth" and "achate" we now say "jacinth" and "agate"; I do not know why the Greek name "smaragd" was abandoned two hundred years ago in favour of the French "emerald."

The learning displayed in *The Hierarchie of Angels* is positively intimidating. One marvels how, in those days, when there were so few books of reference, the poet could even have come across a tithe of the information he lavishes. He must have been as insatiable a reader as he had been a writer of poetry. It should not be supposed that his epic is one solid mass of thirty thousand verses. It is relieved by prose essays, called "observations," sandwiched between the Tractats, and these are stiff with pagan, patriotic, and philosophical learning. Heywood had studied with care the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, a writer greatly neglected in England in the seventeenth century. He appears to be on easy terms with every astrologer, every devil-worshipper, and every emblematist of the Renaissance. He lightens his own load, and indulges his passion for rigmarole by printing a great number of translations from the Greek and Latin

poets. What long dialogues out of Lucian and tirades from Seneca have to do with the Thrones and the Dominations it is quite impossible to say, but there they are, and often they are excellent of their kind. They are so good and so numerous that it might be worth while to pick them out and reprint them as a separate volume.

The plates are elaborate, and by various hands; one is signed by Droeshout; this is not Martin Droeshout, who engraved Shakespeare's bust, but his brother John. Some of the designs are glowing with unconscious humour. In that dedicated to the Seraphim, a bulky Seraph floats in air over a narrow sea, which, in defiance of geography, flows with violent current between Jerusalem and Delphos. Both cities are in flames. Some ibexes have galloped down to the shore to look on, and in the foreground is an enormous rabbit, like a young elephant. Fabulous fishes, larger than whales, disport in the flood. The meaning of this composition escapes me.

It was, I imagine, the fine condition of these plates which attracted Robert Ross, who was not particularly interested in early English poetry. They mark the state of English engraving in 1635, under the prestige of Rubens, and in the immediate influence of Vorstermann. The very elaborate frontispiece is by Thomas Capell, whom Evelyn praises so highly. The best plates are those designed and engraved by George Glover, but none are in very good taste or very brilliant in execution. English engraving was in a state of transition; the Flemish practice was dying out, and the French had not come in. Fairthorne was still in Paris, studying under Robert Nanteuil, and engraving did not really revive till he came back to England. These, I presume, were among the considerations which attracted Robert Ross to *The Hierarchie of Angels*. He was particularly sensitive to the historical atmosphere of art, as distinguished from the dry

detail of iconography. His imagination loved to reconstruct the taste of bygone epochs, and I can believe that he was able to comprehend the feelings of the men who expended a wealth of ingenuity and labour on work so little intelligible to us as the plates in this neglected folio.

PASCAL AND THE JESUITS

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THERE was a Bishop of Ypres at the beginning of the seventeenth century, whose name was Cornelius Jansenius. He wrote a huge book called *Augustinus*, in which he recalled the Church to the doctrines of St. Augustine, and attacked the Jesuits, who immediately responded to the challenge. The new Puritan Catholics of Port Royal accepted the views of Jansenius soon after the death of that Bishop in 1638. The Jesuits appealed to the Pope, who took four years to read the *Augustinus*, and then vaguely banned it as containing certain doctrines which were "semi-Pelagian." Port Royal, mainly by the voice of the great Arnauld, expostulated against these charges, and denied that the heresies in question were to be found in Jansenius.

The controversy about "efficacious grace" and "sufficient grace" now began to occupy universal attention. Under examination, Arnauld bluntly declared that the "semi-Pelagian" doctrines did not exist in the writings of Jansenius, and were the invention of the Jesuits. He was threatened with ecclesiastical penalties, and some day about January 18, 1656, he gathered his friends round him at Port Royal and read them the reply which he proposed to make. When he had finished the friends preserved a respectful silence, and Arnauld felt that he had failed. His style was cold, heavy, and involved. Conscious of his supporters' disappointment, he turned to a young layman, a mathematician in his thirty-third year, Blaise Pascal, and said: "You, who are so ingenious,

si curieux, you ought to do something for us!" Pascal could but obey, and the result was one of the most famous books of the world.

Nicole had complained that the writing of Arnauld, whom he worshipped as a teacher and a man, was "solidly dry and dryly solid." There was nothing dry about the new protagonist, for whom Nicole at once began to prepare material. Pascal must have found Jansenius heavy, and the Molinists dull beyond expression, but Nicole dug out the metal with which Pascal forged his burning arrows. On January 23, for he lost no time, there was published in Paris an anonymous letter, "written to a man in the provinces by one of his friends on the subject of the present disputes in the Sorbonne." This was the earliest of the celebrated *Lettres Provinciales*, seventeen of which appeared in rapid succession during the next two months. In the first three letters Pascal defends Arnauld, who, nevertheless, was finally condemned on February 15.

Pascal then turns on the enemies of Port Royal, and begins his fierce attack on the Jesuit Fathers. He has been reading the Casuits, and they have made his hair stand on end. He considers all theological subtleties as worse than useless unless they lead directly to a holy life. When we reach Letter V the blow has fallen upon Port Royal, Arnauld has been degraded and is now hiding in Paris, while the famous school is broken up and the boys (Racine was amongst them) dispersed to their homes. Pascal lost all compunction; he charged the Jesuits with deliberately encouraging moral laxity, and treated them as murderers and robbers. The intellectual world, overwhelmed by his eloquence and wit, rejoiced in the discomfiture of the foe.

As long ago as 1768, Voltaire, who greatly admired the *Provinciales*, and who could not be accused of the least weakness for the Jesuits, but whose intellectual probity

was complete when personal prejudice did not interfere with it, pointed out that Pascal, in composing his exquisite book, had not been strictly just to his opponents. His entire argument rests upon a doubtful basis. Port Royal charged the society, as a whole, with extravagant opinions which were merely personal to certain Spanish and Flemish Jesuits. Equally damning passages might have been quoted from individual Dominican and Franciscan fathers, but this did not enter into Pascal's design. His aim was to attach obloquy to the Jesuits in particular by proving that they had laid a plan for deliberately corrupting the morals of society, which is a thing, as Voltaire remarks, that no sect or group of sane human beings ever yet thought of doing.

But in polemics the great object is to render your enemy ridiculous by arguments which he cannot press back upon you, and this is what both sides were trying to achieve in the famous "querelles de la grâce." Pascal did it with infinitely more skill and wit than his antagonists, but he was scarcely more unbiassed than they were. He wrote with conviction, but he wrote as an advocate. He was full of ardour and courage, and ready for any service which could help the cause he had so eagerly adopted. We must think of him not yet self-subdued to the humbleness of his later contrition. It is not the sorrowing martyr of the *Pensées* whom we meet in the *Provinciales*, but a young man still triumphant in the pride of genius. What Pascal dared to call the "impious buffooneries" of the Jesuits, that is to say, such looseness of statement as is abhorrent to the conscience of the mathematician, infuriated him and inflamed him, and he gave the enemy no quarter.

A feature of the greatest writers is that their works, in spite of their extreme familiarity, are never exhausted. There is always a "new view" obtainable of Shakespeare

and Cervantes, of Goethe and Pascal. Dr. H. F. Stewart, whose admirable *Holiness of Pascal* placed him in the forefront of those who have studied the Christian philosopher, not merely gives the reader, in his new edition of the *Provincial Letters*, a fuller and more luminous setting to the text than it has perhaps ever had before, but he indicates a line of thought which is not familiar to most of us, and which deserves close attention. It was started by M. Ernest Jovy in his *Pascal Inédit* of 1908, and it simply is that Pascal, who was an unflinching Jansenist when he began the *Letters*, was retreating from the Port Royal sect even while he wrote them, and ended his life in complete disillusion. M. Jovy was set on the track of this theory by discovering the notes which Father Beurrier made of his last conversation with Pascal just before his death.

Dr. Stewart expands the view that the great philosopher was slowly abandoning, not Augustinianism, which he supported staunchly to the end, but the cramping bigotry of Port Royal. Nicole, as early as 1657, was drawn away from the friends he had served so enthusiastically, into the very camp of the Thomists. He could not bear the harshness, the fierceness, of the extreme Port Royal, and it is not sufficiently remembered that Nicole wrote long afterwards: "Feu M. Pascal, avec qui j'ai eu le bien d'être très étroitement uni, n'a pas peu aidé à nourrir en moi cette inclination."

The general public in England and France no longer takes the violent interest in theological disputes which it took in the seventeenth century. We can with difficulty realise the passion which animated a country town like Mâcon to suspend all business while a boy, dressed up as "Sufficient Grace," dragged through the street a dummy Bishop of Ypres, with blackened features and a paper mitre. During the Oxford Movement eighty years ago,

purely theological questions awakened extreme general excitement, and perhaps the reverberation of Newman's *Apologia* may help us a little to realise the sensation created by the *Provincial Letters*. But the latter was far more violent and universal. The theme of Grace, that is to say, divine help to carry out human free will, offered casuistical difficulties which fascinated readers of every class.

The subject was one which encouraged wire-drawn discussion of a kind unwelcome to the modern spirit, but excessively attractive to Pascal's contemporaries. It laid a snare for churchmen, who have always been constitutionally tempted to be less honest in argument than men of the world. This lack of honesty was exposed by Pascal in terms of such exactitude, brevity, and lucidity as the world had never seen before. The flashing sword of irony had never yet dissected the flabby forms of casuistry with such wonderful exactitude. By the end of the Third Letter, all emancipated minds were on Pascal's side, and victory was assured.

Then he turned to ask why the Jesuits had attacked the doctrine of grace so grossly, and how they had dared to accuse Arnauld of accepting certain heresies which turned out not to be in the text of Jansenius. He fastened on the ethics of Jesuit teaching, as displayed in their behaviour to Arnauld, and we must remember that what makes the *Provincial Letters* so vivid and glowing to us to-day, in spite of all the dreariness of "probalilism" and "tutiorism," and the rest of the musty formulas, is the fact that the *Letters* are instinct with friendship and courage, and the writer as secure in his daring as he is light-hearted in his enthusiasm.

The point at which the *Lettres Provinciales* have exercised most direct influence over English opinion doubtless is their exposure of Jesuit casuistry. If Dr. Stewart is

correct in his theory that Pascal was slipping away from his allegiance to Port Royal before Letter XVIII was written, it is almost whimsical to consider that he had already prepared some centuries of misconception for his enemies. In England the prejudice against the Society of Jesus is deeply rooted. We had a proof of it the other day in the reception of Mr. Justice Darling's surprising outburst. On the other hand, the extraordinary fascination which the legend of Port Royal has exercised over successive generations of Englishmen is doubtless to be accounted for less by English adherence to the doctrines of Arnauld and Mother Angélique (since what has Protestantism to say to the Miracle of the Holy Thorn?) than by the superficial resemblance of the Solitaries to the ascetic Puritans of our own seventeenth century.

One of the most puzzling problems connected with Pascal is the strange way in which the *Provincial Letters* came to an end. There were seventeen letters, collected in the quarto first edition of February 1657. My own copy of this rare volume has an eighteenth letter added to it, with many other curious appendices. The fragment of a nineteenth letter was not published, but has been found; it breaks off in the middle of a sentence. I recollect no other of the great books of the world which exists in so truncated a state, in spite of the fact that the author had full opportunity to conclude it. The body of the *Provinciales* consisted of the seventeen letters only, and the subsequent ones were written after the reception, on March 17, 1657, of the Bull of Pope Alexander VII. Whether, as M. Boutroux and other leading Pascalists suppose, Pascal was so much reassured by the indignation of French churchmen, even of many bishops, against the Bull that he regarded his work as finished; or whether, as others hold, he shrank from further exasperating the rage of the enemies of Port Royal, it would not be easy to

decide. No one speaks on a matter of this kind with more authority than Dr. Stewart, who sums up his own conviction as follows :—

"Add to the gradual and increasing external pressure [from Rome], Pascal's inward movement away from Port Royal towards a more human system of thought, as indicated in the last two Letters, and you have all the reasons for a weakening of the offensive. But of a weakened offensive Pascal was of all men the least capable. He could not adopt a middle way. It is consonant with his character that he should have ceased writing as abruptly and impetuously as he had begun."

This is ingeniously said, but I cannot think that it quite solves the enigma, and as to a weakened offensive, the supporters of this theory seem to have forgotten for the moment that when Pascal, on his death-bed, was asked whether he was sorry that, in the *Provincial Letters*, he had been so hard on the Jesuits, he replied no, he only wished he had been harder still. But it is a pleasant idea, if we may really dare to encourage it, to think that Pascal grew less and less in sympathy with the excessive Puritanism of the Jansenists. Here in England and Scotland we have only just escaped the tyranny of those who invent new sins and crush mankind under loads which God never laid upon it. What would have become of the civilisation of France if the spirit of Port Royal, which so many English people sentimentally admire, had really prevailed?

A POET AMONG THE CANNIBALS

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In 1913 Mr. Thomas J. Wise printed privately, in an edition of only twenty copies, from the unique manuscript in my possession, a preposterous and ribald poem by Swinburne called "The Cannibal Catechism." At that time we were unable to discover any particulars as to the purpose of the piece or the circumstances of its composition. From the high spirits and the lyrical skill which it displayed, as well as from the character of the handwriting, we could be sure that it belonged to the early 'sixties. Later I discovered that my MS. had originally passed through the hands of Charles Bradlaugh, but still there was no light on its origin.

Through the kindness of my distinguished friend, the veteran Sir Edward Brabrook, I have now been able to trace the history of this curious poem, which illustrates an episode in Swinburne's life which has hitherto wholly evaded biography. If it is somewhat indecorous, we must remember that we are dealing not with the tame old captive whom a younger generation went down to Putney to visit thirty years later, but with a flaming creature, instinct with genius, whose vagaries were the wonder and terror of society. "The Cannibal Catechism" belongs to the flowering period of "Atalanta in Calydon"; it was written in 1865.

In 1863 Dr. James Hunt (1833–1869), an eccentric ethnographer, whose pretensions to scientific authority

were rudely contested by Huxley, founded the Anthropological Society, which lasted till his death. It contained a certain number of serious seekers after truth, like Sir Edward Brabrook; it also contained, no doubt, several persons of vivacity whose main object was the humiliation of Mrs. Grundy, a savage tyrant in those days. In April 1865, Algernon Swinburne joined the Society, and was among the latest, if not the very last, of those included in its list of Foundation Fellows. At that time council meetings sat in the afternoon of the days when evening meetings of the Society were to be held for the reading of papers, and this led to the formation of a club for members to dine together in the interval. As I have indicated, the spirit which animated many of the members of the Society was that of revolt against conventionality, and this became, in fact, the bond of union, and almost the condition of membership of the club, in testimony of which it was christened the Cannibal Club. Dr. James Hunt, as President of the Anthropological Society, was naturally chosen to be chairman of the club.

The Cannibal Club met at Bartolini's Hotel, near Leicester Square, close to the Society's meeting-room in St. Martin's Place. It dined in front of a mace, which represented the ebony head of a negro gnawing the ivory thigh-bone of a man. To this object Swinburne irreverently gave the name "Ecce Homo"; it was always placed on the dinner-table opposite the president. The Italian cooking at Bartolini's became the text for many jokes of a more or less anthropological nature, often, as I understand and can well believe, more witty than delicate. Before the poet joined the club he dined as the guest of one of its members, and it is believed that the club induced him to join the Society rather than the Society the club, since he was never a serious ethnographer. He was invited to become a member of the club as soon as he had qualified himself by being

elected a Fellow of the Anthropological Society. He was, between 1865 and 1869, a regular attendant at the club dinners whenever he was in town. The poem which I possess, called "The Cannibal Catechism," was written with the purpose of being recited or sung on solemn occasions after or during the banquet, but no one remembers that it ever was so performed. Swinburne, however, was the life and soul of these parties, and Sir Edward Brabrook, the sole survivor (I suppose) of these cannibal feasts, recalls that Swinburne "evidently enjoyed himself very much" at them.

His chief cronies at the Cannibal Club were Sir Richard Burton, who is believed to have introduced him, and Thomas Bendyshe, a fantastic character, then one of the Senior Fellows of King's College, Cambridge. In the records of the Anthropological Society the minutes of a discussion on a paper read before the Society on March 17, 1868, have been preserved, the subject of the paper being "Europeans and their Descendants in North America." Mr. Swinburne joined in the debate, and praised both Poe and Walt Whitman, the latter being still high in his favour. He said, among many other things, that "in his opinion American intellectuality was an original, distinct native product, not derivative from any other country," and he instanced Emerson as a writer who could not have been produced except by America.

Soon after this date, and particularly after the tragical death of its President, the Cannibal Club fell into desuetude. In February 1871, Richard Burton made an effort to revive it, and the old members were invited to attend "a Cannibalistic gathering." Swinburne's answer was: "I shall come and bring my friend (Simeon) Solomon.—Yours in the Cannibal faith, A. C. Swinburne." The members dined together, and "enjoyed a delightful evening," but, as frequently happens in such cases, the old

spirit could not be galvanised into new life. The Cannibal Club met no more. I believe my readers will think this odd little passage of literary history worth recording, and again I thank Sir Edward Brabrook for helping me to preserve it.

THE LETTERS OF TCHEKHOV

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Why cannot Western Europe hit upon some uniform system for the transliteration of Russian proper names? It is positively maddening to have to choose a spelling every time a modern writer has to be quoted. When the author of *The Cherry Orchard* was first introduced to English readers he was called *Chekhov*. But before that he had been spoken of as *Tschechow*. That was felt to be altogether too formidable, and he was presently re-baptised as *Tchekhoff*, with *Tchekhov* and *Tchekhof* as pleasant little variants. Now Mrs. Garnett foists *Tchehov* upon us. To my shame, I read no Russian, but I cannot believe it necessary to spell in six different ways the name of a writer who was alive so lately as 1904. As one of these forms seems to be just as good as another, I refuse to abandon *Tchekhov*, in which, through English and French translations, I became, like most Western Europeans, acquainted with his remarkable genius.

During the half-dozen years which preceded the late war, the stories of Anton Tchekhov were widely read in this country. When Tourgenev, Tolstoi, and Dostoievsky had been completely accepted, and had become classics, the curiosity of English readers passed on to a later generation. It met with a considerable number of writers, each espoused by an admiring band, and each, no doubt, recommended by some quality of force or originality. We were, about 1910, not a little infatuated with what we supposed to be the genius of Russia.

Most of these authors, as we look back over a decade, are a little tarnished now; their reputations have become

rusted over, and we no longer rave about their merits. But there was one who was neither squalid nor meretricious, who neither piled murder upon murder, nor poured the balms of sentimentality over tramps and harlots, who, marvellous to relate, Russian though he was, possessed in full measure the wholesome gift of humour. This was the delightful Tchekhov, to whom, having enjoyed his novels and his plays, every one will be glad to be brought nearer by reading the Letters which Mrs. Garnett has selected from his published (or, perhaps, unpublished?) correspondence. To her selection she has prefixed a Memoir "abridged and adapted" from one which, we are led to suppose, has been printed in Russia.

It is dangerous to adapt and abridge, and this part of the work has been carelessly done. The Memoir, though extensive, and in many instances interesting, fails to tell us when the novelist was born, or where; it does not say when or why he became a physician; nor when or how he became an author. These facts—not, surely, of slight importance—can, it is true, be recovered from the text of the Letters, but they have been "abridged" out of the Memoir.

Although he said that he suffered from "a disease called autobiographobia," in other words, had too much good sense to wallow in self-revelation, Tchekhov's Letters abound in those personal touches which are the life of epistolary literature. In one of them he betrays several of the secrets concealed by Mrs. Garnett: "I, A. P. Tchekhov, was born on January 17, 1860, at Taganrog," he says. So recent a phenomenon is the supremacy of Russian fiction that we may note that, modern as Tchekhov seems, he had reached maturity before the death of any one member of the great generation. He was obliged to choose a profession early in life, and he began to study medicine at the age of twenty. Throughout his career, his familiarity with the facts of science preserved him from many of the vagaries of his coevals. He was

remarkable for being always on his guard not to outrage the laws of life, and he smiled at some of the absurdities of the self-styled "realists."

In one of his letters, we find the odd remark that "the conditions of artistic creation do not always admit of complete harmony with the facts of science." It would have been interesting to induce him to develop this statement. Novelists of the highest merit have described the deaths of inebriates from spontaneous combustion, a notion fraught with picturesqueness. Would Tchekhov have admitted in fiction a scene the possibility of which is denied by his own medical faculty? At any rate, in the light of his sterling good sense, he wrote "to the class of those who rush into anything with only their own imagination to go upon, I should not like to belong."

If, however, as Tchekhov says, his wife was Medicine, his mistress was Literature. From the first, his letters give us the impression of two motives, an insatiable curiosity about life, and an irresistible impulse to fix his observations in durable form. As a lad we find him deeply influenced by Turgenev and by Gontcharov, an interesting selection, as these two writers were artists, pure and simple, with nothing of that evangelical passion which, from opposite points of view, occupied the thoughts of Tolstoi and Dostoievsky, and swept them up to such strange heights of prophecy.

In later years, when the young Tchekhov was active in the field of letters, Tolstoi, who regarded him with benevolence, regretted that he was "only a very clever photographer." He was much more than that, but Tolstoi perceived in him the absence of the prophetic ardour. It is remarkably absent in these letters, which, on the other hand, are full of keen and comic observation, melancholy thought, response to every change of light and shade, but without the slightest aptitude for reform or even censure. Tchekhov, as we follow him, shares with us his impressions of the world. In his company we find life crowded and

difficult, but profoundly amusing. All the little fugitive affairs which make existence exhilarating and distressing flit like effects of light and shadow across the mirror of his correspondence. He betrays himself, as his own Trigorin does in *The Sea Gull*, and we witness the struggle between his active artistic invention and the languor of his Russian temperament.

At the age of twenty-one he began to write, and presently to publish in the newspapers, short stories. He was squeezed for money from the first, and although at one time and another he was in possession of considerable sums, like poor Henri Murger he never ceased to hunt "cet animal féroce qu'on appelle la pièce de cent sous." Mr. Maurice Baring has said that Tchekhov "represents the extreme period of stagnation in Russian life and literature" which followed the Russo-Turkish War. In passing this judgment, I presume that he was thinking of the novelist's earlier writings, since it hardly seems to describe with justice the works of his maturity.

Doubtless, in 1886 and 1887, when Tchekhov was producing the stories and sketches which originally attracted attention, it was true that his almost colourless agglomerations of minute detail did represent a spirit of stagnation, of utter calm before the storm. No one has appreciated better than he the Russian predilection for mere incident, for the chronicling of little successive events, no matter what their individual importance nor what their lack of relation to other events. That they are incidents is enough to awaken the inscrutable Russian mind to passion. All this is curiously and amusingly illustrated by Tchekhov's early letters. Here is a fragment, selected almost at random, which may give a notion of the easy, flowing caprices of the correspondence:—

"It is not much fun to be a great writer. To begin with, it's a dreary life. Work from morning till night, and not much to show for it. Money is as scarce as cats'

tears. I don't know how it is with Zola and Shtchedrin, but in my flat (in Moscow) it is cold and smoky. They give me cigarettes, as before, only on holidays. Impossible cigarettes! Hard, damp, sausage-like. Before I begin to smoke, I light the lamp, dry the cigarette over it, and only then I begin on it; the lamp smokes, the cigarette splutters and turns brown, I burn my fingers; it is enough to make one shoot one's self. I am more or less ill, and I am gradually turning into a dried dragon-fly."

When this was written, Tourgenev, Pissemsky and Dostoievsky were dead, and a new phase had passed over Russian literature. Tchekhov's principal rival was Korolenko, who was more "serious" and more under the domination of Tolstoi. When we reach the year 1890, a positive event takes place in the life of Tchekhov, and nearly a hundred pages are occupied by a selection from the letters which he wrote home during a remarkable journey to the Far East. Readers of his extraordinary story, *The Steppe*, will recollect the way in which the impression of a vast, uniform landscape and a vague, almost purposeless adventure, are given by means of innumerable touches, hints, half-tones, nothing vivid, nothing, we may almost declare, salient or definite. Yet when all these outlines and shadows have glanced along in front of us we gain the impression which the author wishes to give; we have advanced into a strange and beautiful experience which leaves us charmed and a little mystified.

It is just the same with the letters in which Tchekhov hardly describes but symbolises and suggests his journey through Siberia to the penal settlement of Sahalin. (Oh! these tiresome Russian spellings! You will hardly recognise in *Sahalin* the great island lying along Manchuria, which civilised maps call *Saghalin* or *Sakhalin*.) There was no Siberian railway in 1890, and Tchekhov had to post with broken-down horses or to rock in worn-out

lake-steamers all through the 3000 miles of his journey. "What a deadly road," what "horrors of impassable mud"! But he "won't talk of them now," and the letters rise and fall from the glow of hope to the ashes of boredom, suddenly to soar like rockets into the empyrean of enthusiasm. The charm of private letters is their naturalness, and these of Tchekhov are as natural as the outpourings of a whimsical child.

As is only proper in the correspondence of a man of literature, there is a great deal here about Tchekhov's methods of writing and relations with his fellow-writers. The latter are darkened for most of us by our ignorance of the men and books which are mentioned. The influence of the writings of Grigorovitch upon Tchekhov's genius was evidently important, and would be very interesting if we could refer to those writings. It appears that Grigorovitch, who died twenty years ago, was a forerunner of Turgenev, and that he wrote stories which were "a collection of snapshots." This suggests the method developed by Tchekhov, but I cannot find that Grigorovitch has ever been translated, even into French or German. So, also, Tchekhov speaks with great admiration of the novels of Pissemsky, some of whose books, it is true, are available in French.

But the fact is that the perusal of such a work as these fascinating Letters of Tchekhov tends to show how much there is to be done before we can pretend to understand the mind of Russia. We in the West of Europe have hitherto only explored certain provinces and mapped out exclusive districts in that mysterious continent which is the literature of Russia.

There is one traveller who is at home in this uncharted country, and that is Mrs. Constance Garnett. In this instance, as in so many previous ones, she gives us the impression of a rendering as exact as it is idiomatic and pleasing.

THE UNVEILING OF TOLSTOI

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When Fatima unlocked the forbidden cupboard and found the withered corpses of several ladies who, as she supposed, had died in dignity and had received honourable burial, her horror was probably mingled with a certain sense of satisfaction. If such dreadful things had happened, it was well, on the whole, that she should know all about them, especially as Bluebeard might be back at any minute. The discovery could not fail to readjust her whole domestic economy.

In somewhat the same way, the convinced and, indeed, infatuated Tolstoist will read Gorki's little book of Reminiscences, shocked, it is true, but thrilled and riveted. I have seen it said, I know not on what authority, that these recollections of the novelist form the earliest work of pure literature which has appeared in Russian since the Lenin Revolution. After three years of obscurity, the cupboard is lighted up at last; we peer in upon several dead bodies in awkward positions, and we perceive with distress and excitement that the foremost and finest of them is that of the lord of Yasnaya Polyana. It is surely a very interesting thing that the first act of Bolshevist literature should be to destroy the tomb of its prophet.

The revelation, shocking as it is, is made in perfect good faith. Gorki lived for some time with Tolstoi at Gaspra, in the Crimea, and he took down notes of the old man's conversation, appearance and habits. He now prints these notes, just as they are, in a set of thirty-six fragments, and he appends to it a long, unfinished letter, addressed to

nobody in particular, which he wrote in a fit of violent excitement on hearing of Tolstoi's extraordinary flight from his own house and family in the winter of 1910, an escapade which ended with his death in the railway station of Astapovo.

If the purpose of biography is to thrill the reader, Gorki has succeeded in equalling Cellini and in outdoing Aubrey. The little book is a collection of snapshots, all vivid and some positively startling. What makes Gorki's picture of the elder and greater writer almost unique is the fact that satire, sarcasm, and the ironic spirit are entirely absent. A touch of malice would destroy the whole verisimilitude. We see in it the record of a young man passionately devoted to an older one, and incapable of ill-nature, but also entirely insensible to illusion, and forced, by a sort of burning candour, to reveal everything, even to the lasting discredit of his idol.

When Gorki heard of Tolstoi's final flight, his earliest reflection was that he had made it in order to complete, by a sensational act, " the saintly life of our blessed father, bayard Leo." Gorki had long been aware that Tolstoi was dissatisfied with the literary influence of his religious ideas, and it flashed across him, with intense annoyance, that Tolstoi had determined on this form of suicide in order to " force " the public conscience to yield to his personality, " to dazzle it with the glory of righteous blood." This the remarkable letter of Gorki luminously illustrates, and, in passionate retrospect, he piles up instances of Tolstoi's despotism, of his fatalism, and of his dogmatic personality. In his first anger he plainly says that what he had long unwillingly suspected, namely, that Tolstoi " embodied in his great soul all the defects of his nation," is now proved to be true, and he very ingeniously demonstrates that Tolstoi's apparently senseless escape from his own house was really a consistent and inevitable instance of the " Slav

anti-stateism," which leads Russians always to break forth along the line of least resistance, crawling away from the centre, evading the discipline of government, and, above all, shrinking under cover to escape the light of logic from the West.

What Gorki calls "these mournful cockroach journeyings," these centrifugal escapes from energy and knowledge and system, had now been imitated by the crown of Russian writers, and Tolstoi was no longer anything to his indignant disciple but a magnificent reflection of "the old Russian village scepticism which comes from ignorance." In this new and dismal illumination, Gorki writes down anecdote after anecdote, confession after confession, and Tolstoi stands before us in all his bewildering inconsistency and giant weakness.

Nothing can ever destroy the charm of many sides of Tolstoi's character. He went through life searching for truth that he might use it as an expression of his tenderness and kindliness. He raised pity to the rank of the most eminent virtues, even though it threatened to overwhelm discipline, energy, and responsibility. He seemed to his disciples in the days that immediately followed his last spiritual upheaval, a man who knew everything and had nothing more to learn—a man who had settled every question. This was the aspect he bore to Gorki when, at a date which he unfortunately omits to specify, the young and already famous writer went down to form part of Tolstoi's temporary household at Pleise, and then at Gaspra. This must have been after Tolstoi's renunciation of his estates in 1888, and his subsequent illness, of which mention is made.

The famous renunciation was very characteristic, since the old novelist did not give up a single convenience in his habitual life. As Dr. Hagburg Wright, who was a guest at Yasnaya Polyana, has observed, Tolstoi "lived under

the same roof as before, ate at the same table, wrote and read in the same study," simply as the guest of his wife. It was a mental renunciation, it was a symbol, it was a vague gesture intended to impress the world. He grew mistier and mistier, more sentimental and more passive. He thought Christ too positive; Gorki reveals that he amazingly grew apprehensive that if Christ came to a Russian village, the girls might laugh at Him. He transferred his enthusiasm to Buddha, as more shadowy, less energetic, less defined.

How dim and cloud-like his reflections had grown to be is exemplified by his evolving as an aphorism, "God is my desire." Gorki, with the simplicity of a child, asked him what that meant. Tolstoi screwed up his eyes in silence, and then said, apologetically, "An unfinished thought!" All his thoughts had become "unfinished"; he floated about in a faint vapour of universal forgiveness, of loving one's neighbour; and Gorki, eagerly waiting for wisdom to fall from those majestic lips, was put off with a welter of words which his instinct told him were artificial and insincere.

The picture of the extraordinary old man is not, however, unattractive. But it presents features which are unquestionably disconcerting. One of these is the fact, so frequently mentioned by Gorki, that Tolstoi's conversation was crude with the coarseness of a Russian peasant. Here is a sentence which cannot be put by: "From the ordinary point of view, what he said was a string of indecent words." Russians seem to be little acquainted with modesty of speech, and Gorki himself is apt to call a spade a spade. But Tolstoi—and it really is not a pretty trait—used to put his young friends out of countenance by language which was fitted, perhaps, to a peasant who knew no better, but was certainly no ornament to the speech of an old man who was not merely a great writer but a great

gentleman. For it is important to note that Tolstoi, in spite of his communistic theories, remained to the last an aristocrat through and through.

Gorki notes: "Peasant to him means merely—bad smell; he always feels it, and involuntarily has to talk of it." If any one contradicted him, "suddenly, under his peasant's beard, under his democratic crumpled blouse, there would rise the old Russian *barin*." He snubbed persons who attempted to dispute his theories, until they shrivelled and whined, and until, if Gorki can be believed, "their noses became blue with intolerable cold." A friend of Gorki wrote down what Tolstoi said about Ibsen. It was probably very pointed, since it was thought best, in the long run, to burn the notes of it in the spirit-lamp. These great men! When I was in Christiania twenty years ago I asked Ibsen what he thought about Tolstoi. "He is mad" (*han er gal*) was all the answer I received, delivered with an exquisite loftiness of disdain.

No one ought to read these notes by Gorki who is not familiar with the early writings of Tolstoi, and appreciates the genius which they displayed. In *War and Peace*, in *Anna Karenina*, and in some of the shorter stories of his prime, he added to the service of the world royal golden vessels. And then a gradual change came over him, a disturbance of his relation towards every aspect of human life. His pride towered to an intolerable height; he scorned common sense and common experience; he thought that the delusions of his brain were not merely true, but the whole of truth. His imagination became the victim of his virtues, and he published, in 1890, *The Kreutzner Sonata*, an inhuman prelude to the heresies of his later days. He ceased to be of service to art or mankind, but with the loss of so many qualities or the revelation of so many deficiencies, he retained indisputable size and force.

Intellectually, spiritually, during the close of his life, Tolstoi was a hippopotamus rolling about in a clouded pool. The spectacle of such bulk misoccupied, of such energy wasted, of so much imagination misapplied, would be sad, but not tragical, had he not been taken by a crowd of disciples as a saint and a prophet and a master. Gorki deals very plainly with these disciples, who gathered around Tolstoi at Yasnaya Polyana, fawning upon him "with their boneless, perspiring hands and lying eyes," and encouraging him in all his flouts at science and art, at private and public discipline.

Although the revelation is so searching and so (even outrageously) frank, the general impression of Tolstoi which Gorki leaves upon us is a lovable one. He makes us feel, in the midst of the folly and the ugliness, what a very great man Leo Nicolayevitch was even in his last years. Gorki speaks of him unflinchingly, yet with a certain ardour and tenderness which redeem the harshness of his judgment. His little book is a wonderful document, Russian almost to excess, and as remote from Western notions of reserve or decorum as it can possibly be. It is not fit for every reader; but a thoughtful man across whose life during the last thirty years the amazing works of Tolstoi have passed cannot afford to neglect it. Gorki closes on a note of ardour, "the man was Godlike." But he was, as Gorki says elsewhere, "a kind of Russian god, not very majestic, but perhaps more cunning than all the other gods."

'THE ENGLISH POETS'

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STIRRED by a strange emotion I greet the fifth volume of a work with the first volume of which I was most pleasantly associated nearly forty years ago, and under the same editor. Mr. Gladstone was preparing his Midlothian campaign and Stanley was founding the Congo Free State when Mr. Humphry Ward proposed to some friends at Oxford to join him in producing an Anthology (*The English Poets:* Selections with critical introductions by various writers, and a general introduction by Matthew Arnold. Macmillan and Co.).

It is old history how successful the venture was, how opinion was stirred to its depths by Matthew Arnold's paradoxical and provocative, but eminently sympathetic, preface on the nature of poetry, how marvellous a galaxy of talent Mr. Ward drew forth among his seniors. No other editor has ever combined so many stately contributors, for Dean Stanley and Dean Church were here, and Sir Henry Taylor, and Walter Pater, and Goldwin Smith, and Mark Pattison, and Swinburne, and indeed everybody then in authority; with a sprinkling of the younger crew, such as W. E. Henley, and Lang, and Mrs. Humphry Ward. The youngest of us all, if I remember right, was Andrew C. Bradley, then quite unknown, a young fellow of Balliol, who first revealed, between these dark green covers, his exquisite gift of analysis.

What a collection of Victorian eminence it was, and how the hoofed heel of Mr. Lytton Strachey would crush these mandarins, like chestnut-husks at the chestnut-root! But

they seemed extraordinarily brilliant at the time, and at all events they represented no school or clique. It was part of Mr. Ward's cleverness that he fished in all waters. But now the extraordinary thing is that, after forty years, the book comes forward again, and he himself, and some of the old Victorian survivors, are here still; three contributors to Vol. I. have articles in Vol. V., and quite a considerable number of the critics of 1880 figure as poets in 1918. Those who were tender juveniles then are hoary veterans now, or have passed into that Olympian air where time has ceased its hurrying flight. But some day it will seem very odd to think that old Lord Houghton and Mr. Aldus Huxley contributed criticism to the same work under the same editor.

The reproach is often brought against English authors that they are unable to act in unison, but in the five volumes of Ward's *English Poets* flocks of lambs have certainly lain down with leopards. One panther or puma failed to join the menagerie; this was Robert Louis Stevenson, who greatly desired to make the selections from Burns and Ferguson. I pleaded for him with Mr. Ward, but a leading Scots divine had already put in a claim. R. L. S. was disappointed, but here he is, in Vol. V., prominent as himself a poet.

In examining a new anthology no one can resist the temptation of suggesting how it could be improved. What a silly proverb that is *de gustibus*, since there is nothing which leads to more disputation than a question of taste! It would be invidious to challenge any of the names which Mr. Ward has included, but those which he has omitted are fair game.

Before I make a single objection, I ought to say that I think his general judgment in this matter sound and final. He has had the courage to pass over in silence several figures that have been stumbling-blocks to criticism. Neither Lewis Morris nor Edwin Arnold nor Theodore

Watts-Dunton nor Alfred Austin is mentioned in this volume. Those, and others like them, were active and able men, much exercised in the writing of verse and honourably persistent in their appeal to second-rate minds. But they were not, in any true sense, or at any inspired moment, poets; they have none of them left behind a single authentic utterance. I am not sure that George Eliot—who was of far stronger general genius than either of the four I have mentioned, and who is admitted by Mr. Ward—has a more solid claim than they, but I will not insist on that. It is a matter of importance that a book of authority, such as *The English Poets*, should mark the distinction between the actively uninspired and the desultory or accidentally inspired writers of verse.

In 1879 I tried to persuade Mr. Ward to spare a couple of pages for George Darley. It was in vain then, and the author of "It is not beauty I demand" is still absent. A more surprising exclusion is that of the author of *Festus*. No historian of our poetry has hitherto dared to drive the venerable figure of Philip James Bailey off the slopes of Parnassus. I wonder whether the present act is accidental, or another proof of Mr. Ward's courage?

Coming down to later times, I miss Lefroy, who wrote sonnets about cricketers with all the fervour of Pindar; Munby, whose "Dorothy" and other horny-handed heroines Robert Browning admired so much; and W. J. Courthope, whose *Paradise of Birds* is a perennial delight. The editor has been wise in not flooding his pages prematurely with the youngest writers, whose claims must still be unmatured; but I join with "Solomon Eagle" in deploring the exclusion of Flecker, whose touch was the most magical of all, surpassing in actual thrill of witchcraft that of the beloved Rupert Brooke himself.

A question rather of tact than of criticism is raised by the omission of Oscar Wilde. It is impossible to believe

that this is accidental, or that it is founded on purely critical grounds. I must be allowed to think that an opportunity has been missed and a duty avoided by thus ignoring a figure so prominent, and with certain readers so influential. If I may say so without presumption, it would have been far wiser, it would even have been more moral, to give two pages to an extract from *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and a couple of brazen stanzas from the clangour of "The Sphinx," showing what Wilde's very limited poetic talent was, than to have made a martyr of him by omitting him altogether. Those who exaggerate his gifts as a writer will merely shrug their shoulders at what they will call a piece of publishers' poltroonery. The very worst way of combating the excessive laudation of Oscar Wilde is to deny that he had any talent at all, while the theory that a man who was convicted more than twenty years ago must never be mentioned in histories of literature is on a par with the scruple of the *Saturday Review*, which, on perusing Mrs. Beecher Stowe's revelations, exclaimed that it should never open its Byron again "without a blush."

THE FOLK-LORE OF THE BIBLE

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An interesting book might be written, giving, without heat or prejudice, a history of the struggle that has taken place within the last three-quarters of a century between the Bibliolatry which regarded Genesis as a plain statement of fact and the science which demanded that Nature should be listened to. With Sir James Frazer's three stately volumes (*Folk-lore of the Old Testament*, Macmillan & Co.) before me it amuses me to think what would have been the fate of this learned author at the beginning of Victoria's reign. His attitude is reverent and pious in the highest degree, but he says things about Abel and Abraham that Voltaire would not have dared to say.

Sixty years ago what a hubbub there would have been over his chapter on the Fall of Man! Orthodoxy would have bombinated out of a thousand pulpits, and burning at the stake would have been judged too mild for so horrid a revolutionary. There are people alive who can just remember the scandal caused after 1844 by *The Vestiges of Creation*, of which the geology, as Darwin said, was "bad" and the zoology "far worse," but in which a first effort was made to get free from the Pentateuchal cosmogony. What a chasm divides the timidity of Robert Chambers from the firm and cool judgment of Sir James Frazer! But 1859 has come between them, with the ordeal of *The Origin of Species*.

As Huxley says somewhere, Darwin was received with

an " outpouring of angry nonsense." One of my own earliest memories is an echo of the pitched battle at Oxford, when Bishop Wilberforce—no less a person!—asked, in full séance of the British Association, whether Darwin was descended from a gorilla on the grandfather's or the grandmother's side. Of such rough abuse even Robertson Smith, in a much later day, had some savage experience. But Sir James Frazer has soared above this dust and din. I think that no evangelical band of fanatics will gather to break his windows in Brick-court. Just thirty years have passed since his essay on Pausanias revealed a new and delicate writer of English. Two years later the first instalment of *The Golden Bough* began the series of solid works, all directed to the same point, which have made him the most eminent of British and probably of European anthropologists. To us, people of letters, he is singularly endeared by his sedulous cultivation of style, in which Addison is patently his master. Science must not claim him exclusively, for literature has his allegiance also.

In the successive volumes of his *Golden Bough* Sir James Frazer investigated the fields of inquiry which broaden out from one extraordinary and romantic point in the folklore of the ancient Italians. In his new book he does the same for the ancient Hebrews. All civilised races have at some time or other emerged from a state of primal savagery, and traces of barbarism survive in their habits and customs. A sort of prudery has forced the majority of students to evade any discussion of such relics in the Jewish Scriptures, although the least reflection would suggest that these also must be subject to the common law. Sir James Frazer has had the courage to look for these ruins of past superstition in the text of the Old Testament, and he produces them, like fossils out of a rock. In doing this he is not absolutely an innovator, but I am sure that no one before him has carried the investigation of survivals nearly so far

as he has, or has brought such a wealth of detail to their illustration.

His plan is to take certain features of Old Testament narrative, and to distinguish between the imperishable monument of spiritual religion which the text presents, and the baser elements, survivals of savagery, which lie buried in it. He produces, the result of his prodigious industry, a multitude of parallel instances from the folk-lore of the world. For example, the story of the Deluge, which Huxley treated from the geological point of view, recurs in more or less degree in every part of the globe.

Sir James Frazer tells us how this legend arose, and how it comes to be so widespread. The traditions take, in remote peoples, grotesque forms. In East Africa it is believed that the human race descends from a hyæna; in Madagascar the crocodile is looked upon as a kinsman, and if this erring brother has to be dragged out of the river and executed for gobbling up a native, he receives, none the less, the honours of family burial. The Baronga are convinced that the chameleon brought death into the world and all our woe, and they avenge this wrong to mankind by throwing a pinch of tobacco into the reptile's mouth, whereupon it expires in many colours. There is no limit to the multitude of fantastic legends which Sir James Frazer collects from all quarters of the barbaric world.

In the age of Shakespeare, Sir James Frazer had a humble precursor, whom I do not think that he names. But the pages of *Folk-lore of the Old Testament* have frequently reminded me of the picturesque folio on *The Ancient Religions before the Flood*, compiled in 1613 by the Rev. Samuel Purchas, and known as his "Pilgrimage." Purchas, as beseemed his clerical profession, expressed a due horror of "the beastly and deformed superstitions" of the heathen, but he set down every scrap of them that he could collect with all the gusto of a convinced folk-lorist.

The book before us forms an excellent text on which might be preached a sermon to the people who write irritating Surveys of Recent Literature and the like, in which they record little else than the feats of a thousand ephemeral novelists. When will these critics, these self-styled historians of literature, learn that fiction is not the only, nor even the most honourable, form of literary energy? It is quite proper that the many novelists who are genuine artists should receive their meed of praise. It is also quite proper that works of pure science should not be classed with literature on account of the information they contain; but on those rare occasions when their form is as precious as their matter, it is an impertinence to pass them over. On these volumes of Sir James Frazer—as on another recent publication which occurs to me, *The Idea of God*, by Mr. Pringle-Pattison—there is not merely expended enough mental energy, but enough skill in style to furnish about nine hundred of the novels which are published to-day and bound into sheaves for the burning to-morrow.

EDGAR POE AND HIS DETRACTORS

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THERE is a homely proverb which tells us that some cats would rather be stroked the wrong way than not stroked at all. If Poe belonged to this feline category, and it is evident that he did, his ghost must feel no reason to be dissatisfied with the history of the last seventy years. Where are the flattered rivals who caused him so much anxiety? Who now remembers Epes Sargent, or who is moved by Pendleton Cooke of Virginia? They are as if they had never been, while Poe, whose sleep their laurels troubled, is one of the most universally discussed of the authors of the nineteenth century. Of American authors he has certainly been the most discussed, and in the long run the heated controversy about his vices and his plagiarisms and his morbidity has been of immense help to his reputation. If this cat has been stroked the wrong way, his fur has, at all events, cast off sparks of electricity which have made a fine blaze of notoriety all around him; and it happens that he was a man of genius as well.

It is a commonplace to say that England perceived the light of Poe while America still lay in darkness. But it is not so usual to admit that France was also in the forefront of appreciation. Baudelaire and Mallarmé made Poe a French classic in their marvellous translations of his prose and verse when his fame at home was yet very unsteady. It is now again a Frenchman who comes forward with a fine contribution to his biography. M. André Fontainas

is a Belgian by birth (he was born in Brussels in 1865), but he came very early to Paris, and is now completely French. He is a poet of rare delicacy and distinction, author of many volumes, of which the first, *Le Sang des Fleurs*, showed his discipleship to Mallarmé, whose close associate he was. It may well be that Mallarmé, by his zeal for Poe, awakened his young Flemish friend's enthusiasm; but M. Fontainas, who has translated the poems of Milton, Keats, and George Meredith, needs no guide in English literature. He has now published a life of Edgar Poe which, although far from the longest, is probably the best that has yet appeared in any language. The facts are stated here succinctly, with reference to the very latest investigations, and we get as precise and full an account of the actual life of the poet, several passages of which must always remain mysterious, as we are ever likely to secure.

A fervent apology for the much-belaboured bard is what M. Fontainas sets out to present, and it is possible to conclude that his indulgence is occasionally excessive. The balance is held with difficulty, but it was preserved successfully, on the whole, by the late John H. Ingram, whose death at Brighton in 1916 (an event unrecorded at the time) removed a man who had devoted himself almost exclusively to the elucidation of Poe's life and works during five-and-forty years, and whose name must always be mentioned with honour by lovers of the poet. M. Fontainas, of course, leans much on Ingram, and he acknowledges due help from the profuse labours of a cloud of American investigators during the last ten years, by whom a formidable mass of Transatlantic material, still much in need of the winnowing-fan, has been collected. That there should be so much mystification, and that it should be so difficult, and yet possible, to get fresh information about a man of letters who lived in places like New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore less than a hundred years ago, is

only to be understood when we realise that Poe was a typical product, on his commonplace side, of the *Martin Chuzzlewit* period of American civilisation. He lived in a whirl of mental activity where most of the figures were of infusorial size, in a country whose bubbling passion found a vent in such enlightened channels as *Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine* and *The Whig Review*. If we were to call up Poe as a social character of his age, he would probably arise before us a ring-tailed roarer at the Great Meeting of the Watertoast Sympathisers. He lived among the Zephaniah Scadders and the La Fayette Kettles of that appalling time, and his memory has to be retrieved, piecemeal, out of the dust-heap of their remains.

But Poe was himself responsible for a great deal of the mystification. Autobiographical truth was not in him, and the lies he told about himself have kept busy a hundred pens. When he thought he was dying, in 1847, he dictated from his bed a simple record of his own life's story, which was a hoax in almost every particular. He described his travels in Greece and his adventures on board a whaler; he told how he fought a duel in Paris and starved in London. Commentators have worn themselves out in trying to follow up these indications. Vain efforts, for Poe never went to Greece, and never saw a whaler, and never fought a duel. He was in lodgings in Boston, Mass., all the time. A French critic, M. Lauvrière, has built up a whole fabric on the statement that when Mrs. Stannard, the earliest of Poe's loves, died, the poet spent long, horrible nights exposed to icy rain and bitter wind in the abandoned graveyard where she lay. It now appears that he was fourteen years of age at the time, and well looked after in an eminently respectable boarding-school.

Poe's love for practical jokes has been his own undoing, and the source of his posthumous misfortunes. His grimmest and insanest hoax was making the Rev. Rufus

Griswold his literary executor. Griswold is an insect that would be completely forgotten were it not eternally embalmed in the amber of Poe's romance. He was a tenth-rate critic, versifier, editor, and man-of-all-work whom Poe met when he went to settle at Philadelphia in 1841. The relations between the two men have lately been worked out with scrupulous minuteness by Professor Killis Campbell in his valuable pamphlet on "The Poe-Griswold Controversy." For the first year nothing but compliments passed when these gentlemen met. Then there was a violent change, and Poe described a work of Griswold's as "a very muttonish production" and its author as "one of the most clumsy of literary thieves." In 1845 they were in each other's arms again; in 1846 Poe discovered that Griswold had been "backbiting" him; all again was rage and fury, and Griswold openly attacked "The Raven." There was now no man whom Poe despised and hated more, although in 1849 he seems to have asked him for pecuniary help. But when he died, on October 7 of that year, he was found to have requested the very Griswold, about whom he had been "witheringly severe," to serve as his literary executor. It was the last and worst of all his series of practical jokes.

Griswold leaped upon the corpse like a ghoul. His chance had come to magnify himself and wipe out the insolence of Poe's satire. On the second day after the poet's death there appeared in the *New York Tribune*, over the signature "Ludwig," an article which has at last been traced to Griswold, in which the character of Poe was mercilessly exposed. The precious executor, however, was not courting obscurity, for in the following January he published his edition of Poe's Works, in two volumes, prefixed by a signed Memoir in which he gave a fancy sketch of the poet as a sort of devil, stained by every vice, incapable of friendship, arrogant, choleric, devoid of

honour, and so spiteful that " his cheek paled with gnawing envy if you spoke to him of wealth." That Poe had contrived to make himself thoroughly disliked by a large circle of journalists is obvious from the fact, which Mr. Killis Campbell expands, that at first very few friends came forward to rebut the charges which Griswold had made, while there were plenty of people ready to protest that it was very sad, and that they had known it all along. It is true that the poet's sister, Rosalie Poe, described Griswold's Memoir as the most " atrocious instance of human iniquity since the days of Cain." But she was held to be biassed, and Griswold, the honest executor, to whom truth was above all worldly considerations, long held his ground.

Let us examine the charges that have been brought against Poe during these last seventy years. I cannot agree with M. Fontainas in holding that Poe was a spotless lamb. Yet I am even more at variance with the Griswold gang, who see in him a coal-black sheep. That he had a weak head, and often drank too much, is, I am afraid, certain; but, after all, Mr. Pussyfoot had not then been appointed the American Lord Chief Justice. That Poe was a sad philanderer is another charge which must be admitted proven. He made love to many women, but he did none of them any harm. They all liked it very much. There were at least a dozen of them, and the pride of each in after-memories of his attention was only equalled by her hatred of the other eleven. What Poe sought for was a mother rather than a mistress; " only a bosom to rest on," as another poet has put it; and his chief fault was hurrying so incontinently from pillow to pillow. Then, we are told that he had no sense of honour, that he was always borrowing money, and that he was rude when he was asked to return it. Doubtless the poor man would have been only too glad to pay his debts, but he could not. I am sorry that he borrowed from people whom he had just attacked,

and whom he proceeded to praise, and then, when he had spent the money, to attack again. I am afraid he did not always behave like a little gentleman, but it is not given to every one to be as Mr. Micawber was, incurably insolvent, yet permanently gentlemanlike. Griswold wrote that Poe's life was passed " without a recognition or a manifestation of conscience." But from what sort of glasshouse did Griswold throw stones?

The story of Poe's life will always be interesting, because there are elements in it which are incongruous, and others which are still a mystery. (It is very remarkable that the investigation of a hundred searchers should leave us still quite in the dark as to how and where Poe spent the last five days of his life!) When he himself said that it is " paradoxical to speak of a man of genius as personally ignoble," he was probably thinking of the wretched circumstances in which his life was cast, and the squalor which they reflected on his weakness. But when we contemplate the mean and flatulent society which surrounded him, and then his own exquisite genius, we are ready to forgive not only his actual faults, but even the crimes which the egregious Griswold invented for his dishonour.

THE ESSAYS OF MR. LUCAS

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Unless my judgment is much at fault, there has written in English, since the death of R. L. Stevenson, no one so proficient in the pure art of the essayist as Mr. E. V. Lucas. In saying so, I do not forget how much excellent prose is constantly being produced among us, nor what a variety of stimulating merit labours for our entertainment. But the particular thing which Montaigne invented in the second story of the Tower of his Castle in the month of March 1571, is delicate and rare. It has not been cultivated with great success anywhere but in England—except, of course, by its immortal French inventor—nor in England save occasionally and by a few select pens. I confess to the heresy of not being able to consider Bacon's highly ornamented chains of didactic wisdom "essays" in the true sense, there being so little in them that is personal or even coherent. On the other hand, Cowley, who first understood what Montaigne was bent on introducing, is a pure essayist, and leads on directly to Steele and Addison, and to Charles Lamb. If we read Cowley's chapter "On Myself," we find contained in it, as in a nutshell, the complete model and type of what an essay should be—elegant, fresh, confidential, and constructed with as much care as a sonnet. There have not been many true essayists, even in English, but Mr. Lucas is one of them.

That Mr. Lucas has learned much from his long and intimate communion with the text of Charles Lamb is manifest, but he is a disciple, not an imitator, of that

admirable man. He early felt that it was an error to copy the tricks and the archaisms of even so exquisite a master, and that there is a danger in producing a mere pastiche of the quaintnesses of Lamb, or of such an earlier model as Addison. How cleverly this can be achieved, when it is done of set purpose, may be seen in Sir James Frazer's marvellous *Sir Roger de Coverley* (Macmillan & Co.), but this has not been Mr. Lucas's aim. He has perceived that much of the "colour" of Steele and Addison was actual colloquialism in their own age, and that the charm of the Tatlers and Spectators lay, not in their oddity, but in the unaffected grace with which they said perfectly simple things in the straightforward language of well-bred people.

Lamb made a perilous experiment when he determined to secure a whimsical effect by imitating the speech of a century and a half before his time. His genius enabled him to carry the adventure off with complete success, but none the less it was dangerous. Less adroit writers simply fall into affectation in their effort to be fantastic, especially if they happen also to have adopted the fashionable contortions of George Meredith. The essay does not achieve genuine success unless it is written in the language spoken to-day by those who employ it with the maximum of purity and grace. It should be a model of current cultivated ease of expression and a mirror of the best conversation. The essays of Mr. Lucas fulfil this requirement.

Possibly the fecundity of Mr. Lucas, which is astonishing, has stood in the way of his reputation. Readers become restive, or tend to turn ungrateful, when a favourite writer makes his bow to them with a book too often. The abundance of Mr. Lucas is certainly surprising. His present publishers announce twenty-nine volumes issued by themselves alone, and I know not how many more are in other hands. The fluency is more apparent than real, for most of these are slender books, and some are scarcely more

than brochures. A rigid calculation would probably show that, while Mr. Lucas's bindings are very numerous, the bulk of his printed matter does not exceed that of rarer visitants. His earliest "book of wayfarers," that delightful collection happily named *The Open Road*, is now more than twenty years old, and is still, no doubt, the volume of his which has penetrated the greatest number of households. But of works entirely his own, *Listener's Lure* is probably that which has been most universally appreciated. His essays, pure and simple, have, I conjecture, enjoyed a very uniform welcome, modified only by the more or less popular or amusing nature of the subjects he treats. Some day I hope he will find time to rearrange his writings in that "collected" form which is the Mecca to which every pilgrim-author looks pathetically forward.

The little volume (*The Phantom Journal, and other Essays*) which gives me a thread on which to hang these wandering remarks, is wholly miscellaneous in character. It strings together specimens of Mr. Lucas in each of his moods, and offers therefore a good opportunity for the comparative study of his mind. We see that, with all his versatility, he avoids (as Lamb contrived to avoid) the purely didactic. This successful resistance to the instinct for teaching amounts to a positive, not a mere negative, quality. The desire to instruct, to occupy a pulpit, has been one of the greatest snares in the path of British essayists, and they have fallen the more inevitably into it because of the curious fact that, at the start, nothing is more eagerly—and even greedily—welcomed than the didactic. Moral reflections, especially if introduced with a certain polite air of solemnity, are to the British public what carrots are to a donkey; they cannot be resisted, the audience runs to read. But the appetite is satiated as quickly as it was aroused, and no form of literature fades out of sight more suddenly or more completely than do

volumes inculcating Magnanimity in Humble Life or the Combating of Error by Argument.

A curious example is the fate of *Lacon*, a book first published over one hundred years ago—that is, early in 1820. It was a series of essays by a clergyman, the Rev. Caleb Colton, the success of which was sudden and overwhelming. The printing presses could not turn out copies of *Lacon* fast enough to satisfy the demand. Mr. Colton was so uplifted by his popularity that he took to gambling on a large scale and had to fly his incumbency and the country. He made a fortune by cards, and lost it, and blew out his brains in the Forest of Fontainebleau. Meanwhile, thousands of infatuated readers were drinking in moral truth from the pages of *Lacon*, which suddenly lost all its attraction for everybody, and is now deader than the deadest of the dead books that "Solomon Eagle" has been bewailing. Such is the fate of the didactic essay.

The two sections of the present volume which have entertained me most are those which deal, very irregularly, with the little town of Monmouth. Mr. Lucas visited that borough, as I gather, during the war, and made inquiries regarding two objects—the Man of Ross's arm-chair and a comely work entitled *The Elegant Girl*. Each of these is a subject which suits the genius of Mr. Lucas to perfection, and the consequence is that we have here two of the most typical essays which his entire writings are able to present to us. The first is informing—for Mr. Lucas, though never didactic, is willing, and even anxious, to share his information with the reader—the second is simply entertaining. Mr. Lucas went to Ross itself, which, indeed, rewards a visitor. Unhappily, he entered it at a moment when Ross could not have been looking its best, for "intensity and density of rain" are no embellishments to landscape.

I have a happier memory of my first sight of the little embattled town much more than fifty years ago, for we

approached it, as I suppose visitors infrequently do, by boat, sailing and rowing up "pleased Vaga," as Pope called the Wye. I still recall the dark and velvet woods that ran down to the lustrous river, and then, at a turn, the sudden apparition of the sunlit spire of the famous church of Ross. How much depends on the hour of view, as well as on the point of view! Later, on a second visit, I felt as much as Mr. Lucas does the squalor and the commercialism of Ross, which, for all its teashops and its postcards, has no honest appreciation of John Kyrle. As an easy and yet careful and deliberate investigation of a point of literary and historical psychology nothing could be more adroit than this delightful study.

Our essayist is always happy when some by-way of literature invites him to saunter down it. He loves to dwell on the oddities of Borrow, as all good souls do, and will, until the old man of Oulton has been over-praised and over-analysed into a commonplace. In *An East Anglian Bookman* Mr. Lucas expatiates on Green's *Diary of a Lover of Literature*, which he introduces as a new discovery. Of this interesting diary (1796–1800) I was the first person to analyse the merit, in a causerie first published thirty years ago. I grieve that Mr. Lucas has forgotten that fact, and I administer to myself this little advertisement, as a lozenge, to take away the taste of my disappointment. An enchantingly whimsical essay "On Epitaphs" was manifestly started by a perusal of that very strange miscellany *Spoon River Anthology*. The inscription on the tomb of Mrs. Jones is singularly pleasing :—

Here lies
MARY JONES,
the Wife of William Jones.

Honour her memory, for she
was lenient when her husband
was in liquor.

The churchyards of our country villages would be far more inviting than they are now, and would even be more instructive, if they contained more sincere and more vivid epitaphs than local habit now thinks decorous. It is impossible to believe that the entire population of a village has lived and died resigned to unbroken tribulation and unsullied by a single fault. Our cemeteries are like the pastorals of M. de Florian, of which M. de Thiard said that they were charming, but that a wolf would improve them.

'IN A GREEN SHADE'

'IN A GREEN SHADE'

With the gift of a great many volumes, Mr. Hewlett has added to our pleasure and stimulated our fancy for a quarter of a century, since it was in 1895 that he led off the dance with his piquant *Earthwork out of Tuscany*. During that time he has challenged us as a novelist, as a poet, and even as a critic of our social conventions, but I do not recollect that he has ever before appeared as an essayist. His ingenuous preface reveals him as slightly uneasy in this new garment, which he affects to regard as an undress, a sort of dressing-gown and slippers suitable to "a leisured and comfortable" state.

Every one will be glad to know that one who has added so much enjoyment to the circle of his readers is now able to write "under conditions favourable to leisurely and extended thought." May it be so with him for another quarter of a century! But he needs offer no apology for his whimsical chapters. They are delightful in themselves and characteristic of him; and the description of the Wiltshire village which offers him its rustic activities is only too tantalisingly outlined. We want to know more of this home of "embodied tradition," which makes Mr. Hewlett so happy.

The first four essays supply the scene. The author lives, he tells us, among Iberians, and it pleases him to believe that his neighbours are all neolithic on the distaff side. "Being known," he says, "in these parts for a friendly soul, and trusted, I have fallen into the position among the peasantry which the parson used to hold." It

sounds almost too good to be true in these harsh days of "labour unrest," but Mr. Hewlett's is not the only Southern village where there is still peace in the local generations. It makes one hope, as one looks out anxiously into the dim and boisterous future. Mr. Hewlett has a neighbour, a farmer, who is worth a couple of hundred thousand at the least, and who can neither write nor read. Could anything sound more Arcadian or offer a more definite challenge to Mr. Herbert Fisher's schemes of enforced universal education?

Mr. Hewlett believes in pure instinct, which is, I suppose, another name for tradition. The whole populace of his village, which is more than half Nonconformist, attended service at the Peace Celebration in the parish church. But Mr. Clutton-Brock and the Hibbert Lecturer were not there, being detained, Mr. Hewlett appears to think, by spiritual pride turned inside out. He charges them to become as little children, but I fear that they are tainted with sophistication. Mr. Wells, another prophet whom Mr. Hewlett deals with, is so tainted, I am sure. Our essayist is resolute for the simple life in intellectual as well as in social matters.

A considerable section of these essays is occupied by a Devil's advocacy in literary history. Mr. Hewlett enjoys contemplating the seamy side of genius, and he is very clever in putting his finger into the rents, and widening them. He is not quite sure that he likes any one to be more prominent than any one else, and he will have no superstition about hero-worship. He overdoes this business of levelling a little, I think; but there has been so much over-adulation that his sharp irony will do no harm. The longest of these literary essays is one on "Sheridan as Maniac." He calls the author of *The Rivals*, in relation to his dalliance with Lady Bessborough, "the vainest sentimentalist ever begotten in Ireland or fostered in

England." He founds his attack on the Granville letters, lately published. Sheridan was a butterfly, but surely Mr. Hewlett breaks him on too savage a wheel. He takes Mrs. Moore, the Bessie of the poet's correspondence, as a foil to her husband, praising her excessively, while he scorns Tom Moore himself. Again, perhaps, a little too heavy-handed.

The chapter on Coleridge is positively brutal; the essayist rolls that fat figure in the mud, and kicks it. The allegations he makes are true, and very pointedly expressed, but it should be suggested that there was much more than this in Coleridge. By the way, in speaking of contemporary reports of Coleridge's conversation, it is odd that Mr. Hewlett forgets to quote that of Carlyle, which is the best of all. The youthful Coleridge who walked all day, talking, by the side of an enraptured Hazlitt, was not an empty bladder. But even Mr. Hewlett's eloquent and appropriate eulogy of Dorothy Wordsworth would be better without a gibe at William Wordsworth. On the other hand, in his dissection of the petulant author of *Erewhon*, I am wholly with him.

An accurate acquaintance with Nature is not, perhaps, an essential feature of imaginative writing, but it is surely an ornament to it. One of our best living poets has described as a sweet leaf what is really a small citrous fruit, slightly aromatic and acid; and a scentless gum is turned in his verse into a perfumed flower. This comes of juggling with beautiful words, the exact meaning of which is ignored. No such solecisms are a worry to Mr. Hewlett's readers; the author of that noble epic of English agriculture *The Song of the Plow* knows all that should be known about the phenomena of rural life. He is familiar with all the beautiful country flowers, and loves them in spite of their strange, coarse names; when the other bards are fluting about asphodel and hellebore, he responds in harsh terms of sheep's-bit scabious and ladies' bedstraw.

The theme of husbandry is one so poetical in all its bearings, so intimately associated with the primitive occupations and observations of mankind, that it is strange how little it has hitherto attracted the serious thoughts of the poets. They very rarely give any earnest attention to top-dressings, and are even suspected of not distinguishing a mangel-wurzel from a turnip. There was Hesiod in the cloudy days of Greece; and in Rome there was Virgil, incomparable and solitary; and then we come down the ages to Tusser, with the suggestive resemblance of his name to that of Tupper. What a field is left for Mr. Hewlett to write a new "Works and Days," celebrating the succession of the seasons, and all the revolving beauty of the jocund earth! I commend to him a task which no one living is better fitted to carry out in his "leisured and comfortable" retirement. This is how he will do it, but with the final accomplishment of verse:—

"Misty, gossamered mornings, a day all blue and pale gold, bees in the ivy bloom, sprawling, overblown flowers, red apples, purpling vine-clusters, clear evenings. Then this smouldering moon to go to bed by! It is all like a great Veronese wall-picture, or the Masque in *The Tempest*—'Rich scarf to my proud earth!' and summons from me more adjectives than I have needed this twelve-month;"

but these are nothing to the adjectives he will require for his Complete English Georgics in Twelve Books.

The manner of Mr. Hewlett's prose is familiar to all the readers of his romances. It is rich and rough, a little angular and hard, apt to disturb, or perhaps awaken, the reader by a dissonance or a forced image. It has the texture of a tapestry rather than that of the fine embroideries of some recent prose-writers. It is woven in thick, bright threads on a coarse linen material. I say

this, not in blame, but stating a fact, since what we ask from every author is that he should be authentic of himself. But Mr. Hewlett's peculiar style is not quite so appropriate to the essay as to narrative. It is a little too "tight," and it has not the liquid flow which is so charming in the great essayists—in Montaigne, for instance, or Charles Lamb, or Stevenson. "Weather has sent me indoors, chance to an old book"—that is a little too abrupt, a little too rigid, to be the opening sentence of a perfect essay. But to complain of this is, perhaps, to be hypercritical; and of *In a Green Shade* the safest thing to say is that it offers us some hours of charming and various conversation with a mind of great originality, which literature and Nature have combined to adorn.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MRS. ASQUITH

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Autobiography, an interesting art which is now in danger of being exercised to excess, may be roughly divided into two classes. There are memoirs in which the author occupies the centre of the stage, with the limelight full upon him; and there are those in which he stands in the background of the scene and lets the motley procession of society pass by. Greville and Saint-Simon are famous examples of the latter; they are much interested in themselves, as who that writes an autobiography can fail to be? but their primary occupation is with the development of affairs. On the other hand, in the Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini and the *Apology* of Colley Cibber—to name two of the most delightful books in the world—we have a complete concentration on the writer. We can imagine Saint-Simon compiling a history of his times, from which his own figure was omitted, but Cellini is inconceivable without Cellini; such a book would be a desert, a limbo, like Pepys' *Diary* with no revelations about Pepys, or Rousseau with no confessions.

The tendency to-day is unfavourable to the discreet and impersonal type of autobiography, which is declining more and more into the hands of those who lack the force to impose their own character on the attention of readers. An amazing number of trumpery "reminiscences" and "memories of the past" appear, it is true, on the counters of the booksellers and disappear; no species of literature

is more ephemeral. But the autobiographies which hold their own tend increasingly to self-revelation as their central object: their value depends on the importance of the self which is revealed and the skill displayed in the exposure.

Mrs. Asquith, whose Autobiography leaves us with not a moment's doubt as to which group it belongs to, is perfectly frank in demanding attention to herself. She is like a child who rushes into a room full of people, and cries out, "What do you think of my necklace? Isn't my hair charmingly done?" She has no doubt of her reception, and her smile beams round the circle of her hearers. Conversation ceases, while all eyes are turned indulgently on the radiant invader. Anybody in the company who does not happen, from one cause or another, to like the child, is vexed, but so long as she is pretty and amusing and perfectly good-natured, by far the greater number of her auditors will be admirers, and will stop their own talking to listen to hers.

This illustration, of course, does a great deal less than justice to the serious qualities of Mrs. Asquith's book, but I think it defines the peculiar character of her approach, her *naïveté*, her ardour and the coaxing familiarity of her address. The vehemence of her method, her air of rushing in and pouring out her confidences, whether they are asked for or no, her amazing vitality and warmth, her complete imperturbability—all these give a unique freshness to her narrative; but, at the same time, they are dangerous ornaments, and this is not a book which will escape detraction. Mrs. Asquith will have, and will retain, a majority of suffrages, but, as the poet says, you must love her ere to you she shall seem worthy to be loved.

The standard by which any autobiography must be tested is that of truth. But here comes in Pilate's question, which is still unanswered. So much, however,

is clear, that autobiography differs from fiction in this, that while in an invented tale facts may be modified in the interest of entertainment, in autobiography this should never be done under the strongest temptation. The cardinal feature about a memoir must be its sincerity; there must be no faintest suspicion that the facts have been tampered with (as may freely be done in a novel) in order to make their sequence more amusing or more probable. The sincerity of the writer must be beyond suspicion, and he must rely on his own recollections and observations.

But recent books of this class too often indolently depend upon thrice-told tales, and ancient anecdotes refurbished. This is a divergence from the law of truth as it applies to autobiographies. If we measure Mrs. Asquith by this standard, we have to admit that she complies with it. Absolute accuracy is not to be attained by man or woman, and there are, doubtless, unfortunate instances where Mrs. Asquith has not comprehended or no longer remembers. But she sets out to be faithful, and she does not depend on the memories of others. No recent book of "recollections" is more free from *clichés* and vain repetitions.

The book has one serious drawback, and that a technical one. Mrs. Asquith claims that she has not had the training of a writer, yet she has read so much and lived so long in an intellectual atmosphere that she can hardly bring forward inexperience as an excuse for her singular neglect of construction. Her book is a succession of sparkling episodes, some of them told with really incomparable vivacity. I feel quite certain that long after most of the current books "without a dull page from cover to cover" are totally forgotten, people will still be reading how Mrs. Asquith and General Booth prayed together in the railway-carriage; how she defended an East End factory girl in a Whitechapel street-fight, and

how she went out hunting for the first time. These passages, iu their rapid and sprightly variety, their economy of effect, stream before us, and lack for their full advantage only a setting.

But this is what Mrs. Asquith has been too impetuous to provide. In her full but rambling record the dates jostle one another wildly. On page 40 we are in 1886; on page 66 we find ourselves in 1880. Conversations at dinner with King Edward VII. and the Duke of Devonshire are followed by diverting scenes of girlish pertness in the schoolroom. There is no advance, no development. Mrs. Asquith has opened wide the sack and poured its contents into a volume. This is a real misfortune, and one for which the liveliness of the dialogues and incidents does not wholly console us.

That excellent old classic, Peacham's *Complete Gentleman* of 1622, bids us "in all your discourse have a care ever to speak the truth, remembering that there is nothing that can more prejudice your esteem than to be lavish-tongued in speaking that which is false; and disgracefully of others in their absence." Mrs. Asquith, whose courage is unflinching, has undertaken to chronicle the doings of a class of people over whose inner life the veil of a delicate privacy has hitherto been drawn. But, perilous as was the enterprise, I cannot think that the way in which Mrs. Asquith has carried out her task should prejudice her esteem. It is paradoxical to say of so very frank and so very personal a book that it is modest, but I know no adjective more appropriate. If the ghost of Peacham read Mrs. Asquith's account of "The Souls," or her conversations with the political leaders of both parties, or her descriptions of Jowett and of her own fashionable female friends, he would say of this lady that she has a care ever to speak the truth, though she may not always give herself time enough to make sure what the truth is.

No one is competent to give a definite judgment now as to the value and merit of this remarkable book. We are too near the persons involved, and for that reason I could wish that Mrs. Asquith had seen fit to postpone its publication for a few years longer. But no delay would alter the essential character of the narrative, which reveals from inside, and with the authority of a leading participant, the features of a society which has suddenly passed away. Lord Haldane recently pointed out that one effect of the war has been to introduce a new social order into this country. Mrs. Asquith depicts the scene which this new social order has supplanted. We read her account of profuse hospitalities, incessant week-end parties, the refined and luxurious occupations of the ruling class, the knot of leading politicians, opposed in public, but sharing all social pleasures in private; and we feel that to follow all this, is to contemplate something as remote as the world before the Flood. We have lived through it all, and enjoyed it, and behold! where is it? The fashion of this world passeth away, and it survives, already, only in the pages of the memoir-writers.

What has disconcerted so many readers in Mrs. Asquith's revelations is the fact that they combine recentness with remoteness. They are like the cinema-shows which put us out of countenance by exhibiting to-night scenes that were enacted this morning.

Into questions of taste and discretion it is difficult to enter with profit. Mrs. Asquith will be charged with intruding into the privacy of her friends, and of overstepping the limits of reserve. These are considerations for private individuals, and do not concern the wider circle of readers, who will ask, not whether Lady Dash and Mr. Chose like the story of their adventures to be told, but whether the narrative is important, true, and vividly reported. The confessions of autobiographers have always

given offence. No contribution to social history exists which is more delightful than the Correspondence of Horace Walpole, but it was received with a howl of indignation. Those living persons who are mentioned favourably in a volume of memoirs feel bound to express their embarrassment, those who are ill-treated shriek with pain.

But the reader a century hence will care nothing for one or the other, and the resentment will be as dead as the mock-modesty. What will matter, what alone in the long run matters, is the talent and the veracity of the narrative, and the revelation of the character of the writer. Of all these things I can but say—in words used about her conversation nearly thirty years ago by that acidulated observer, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt—"Margot describes all in a few words as well as such descriptions could possibly be." And there we must leave it for the impartial verdict of posterity.

CLOUGH

CLOUGH

The life of literature is so wide and the interests of a particular generation are often so narrow, that it is salutary every now and then to take a dose of verse or prose which has entirely ceased to be popular. It was popular once, and among persons, we are apt to forget, quite as enthusiastic and as intelligent as we are ourselves. In this spirit, as one who takes from the hand of Mr. J. I. Osborne a glass of sarsaparilla, I hasten to sip a critical blood-purifier which I certainly should not apply to for idle pleasure, since it is difficult to think of a single imaginative writer of the Victorian Age more widely remote from us to-day than Arthur Hugh Clough. He has been dead nearly sixty years, and the circle of his personal friends, who adored and admired him, has ceased to exist. We habitually think of the writers among whom he lived without remembering him, and Lord Morley is said to have refused to allow a volume on him to be added to the "English Men of Letters" series on the ground that Clough was not a Man of Letters. Mr. Osborne has composed his monograph in the form of an "English Man of Letters" volume, perhaps in order to supplement this void. He has done his work exceedingly well, not without some irony at the expense of his subject, since it is undeniable that a protracted study of Clough is apt to be fatiguing.

Clough was a contemporary of Ruskin, Froude, Charles Kingsley, and George Eliot, and he had certain characteristics in common with those persons. But there was one great distinction between them and him: while each of

swayed by large, slow, deep-sea currents." This was meant as praise, but it suggests the image of a derelict schooner.

Obviously no lasting memory of this amiable and unselfish man could be based on his opinions or his actions. Yet, nearly sixty years after his death, he is still remembered, and in no danger of being forgotten. He is remembered by his poems, which, although they are amateurish in form and dry in texture, have an element of faint perennial interest. It is a valuable critical exercise to try to discover in what this permanent interest consists, since Clough's verse is almost the negation of poetry, and in particular is devoid of all the qualities which are admired at the present moment. Nevertheless, it has that power of arresting and diverting attention which is given only to living literature. When the body of his verse has been winnowed, not much remains, but there is a handful of golden grains, and they are pure wheat. He wrote short lyrics, some of which appeared in the slender *Ambarvalia* of 1849, and were continued till the end of his life; and he composed those long poems in which the journals of his holidays were roughly versified.

Of these *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* was the most important. (I possess a copy of the original edition of 1848, entitled *The Bothie of Tober-na-Fuosich;* Mr. Osborne does not mention this, nor the ludicrous cause of the sudden suppression which annoyed the author so much.) *The Bothie*, a record in hexameters of the vacation of an Oxford reading party in the Western Highlands, is Clough's most solid claim to immortality. It is very crude and dull in some parts, but in others it has not merely a startling vividness and picturesqueness, but it is sensuous and almost passionate to a surprising degree. His other works were mainly posthumous; he wrote a sort of novel called *Amours de Voyage*, which also is in hexameters, and he left unfinished

Mari Magno, a series of tales in verse, supposed to occupy the leisure of a Transatlantic voyage. In 1861 Clough read *Mari Magno* to Tennyson, and "cried like a child over it." We are not told whether Tennyson wept.

Among the lyrics which Clough produced up to the age of thirty, we find but few which have stood the test of time. These are characteristic of three principal moods: "Qua cursum ventus" is an ethical or gnomic piece of reflection, very gracefully turned; "Lo, here is God, and there is God" is an ironic disquisition of the kind that Clough delighted in, but written with quite unusual sprightliness; and the fragment beginning "Farewell, my Highland lassie," which I conjecture to have been cast aside when he determined to write *The Bothie* in hexameters, has a picturesque warmth hardly to be found elsewhere. Here then, perhaps, is Clough at his very best :—

"I fall to sleep with dreams of life in some black bothie spent,
Coarse poortith's ware thou changing there to gold of pure content,
With barefoot lads and lassies round, and thee the cheery wife,
In the braes of old Lochaber a laborious homely life;
But I wake—to leave thee, smiling, with the kiss upon the brow,
And the peaceful benediction of—*ὁ θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ* ! "

Later—as I suppose, for dates are lacking—he wrote "The Hidden Love" and that truly admirable hymn, almost Clough's only faultless piece, "Say not the struggle nought availeth." These and some pages of *The Bothie* preserve the memory of their author, and promise to continue unassailable. They have far greater value for us than such purely intellectual verses as "Qui laborat, orat," which Mr. Osborne is inclined to over-estimate.

It used to be customary to speak of Clough as a disciple of Wordsworth, and recent critics have seemed ready to take the same view. It is obvious that Clough, as a schoolboy, imitated the simpler numbers of *Lyrical Ballads*, but in his mature work I agree with Mr. Osborne in finding not

a trace of Wordsworth's attitude to Nature or of the majesty of Milton's vision. On the other hand, I think no one has observed the strange and direct influence which Longfellow exercised over Clough's form, although the accent of the latter is more thoughtful and more completely swayed by the desire for veracity than that of the once-popular American. But almost everything in *Ambarvalia* seems to start from Longfellow's *Voices of the Night* (1839). It was immediately after reading *Evangeline* that Clough abandoned his effort to write his Scotch "pastoral" in rhyme, and adopted hexameters, while it is recorded that he received *The Courtship of Miles Standish* just before he began *Amours de Voyage*. We are almost driven to suppose, when once we have observed these coincidences, that there was something sympathetic to Clough in the New England atmosphere, and particularly in the elegance of Longfellow. Clough, proceeding from Oxford and London, welcomed in Emerson such an impression of "perfect intellectual culture" as he thought he had not found elsewhere. Though Clough was a product of the finest English humanism and the bosom friend of Matthew Arnold, he developed a much closer fellowship with Lowell and Whittier than with Browning and Rossetti.

Mr. Osborne has approached his difficult task with candour and taste, and has not allowed himself to be unduly trammelled by the Middle Victorian tradition. He finds it more difficult to know what to make of the elegy in which Matthew Arnold flung a garment of purple and gold round the shoulders of his deceased friend. Yet if we read *Thyrsis* carefully, and do not allow the sumptuous beauty of the scene and the ornament to divert our attention from what is directly said about the subject, we may see that Arnold, in spite of his lifelong affection for Clough, was well aware what a negation his intellectual and imaginative experience really was. Clough

"Learn'd a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd his pipe too soon, and tired his throat—
It fail'd, and he was mute!"

But we turn from this clairvoyance, and from Clough's harsh numbers, to the Dorian pipe and the Cumnor cowslips, to the resuscitated Lityerses-song in the Phrygian cornfield, and poor Thyrsis fades away into an echo. "Man gave thee nothing!"

ZOFFANY

ZOFFANY

Although Zoffany has been regarded with a constantly increasing interest, the very handsome volume published at the Bodley Head is the earliest attempt which has been made to collect in one shape all that can at present be recovered as to the facts of his career. The work of the editors has been thus divided; the writing, critical and descriptive, is done by Dr. Williamson, Lady Victoria Manners, who is an accomplished painter in water-colours, being engaged on the discovery of the pictures in private collections, and on their examination. That fresh material has turned up to the very last is proved by the presence of "Addenda and Corrigenda," supplemented by "Further Addenda and Corrigenda," while one very important fact, the date of Zoffany's birth, appears to have been discovered too late even to be secured on a slip. There follows a certain confusion, due to the lack of positive information with regard to the painter's early life. It is still not explained why, if Zoffany was born, as is now stated, at Frankfort, in 1735, he has always hitherto —even by Mr. Austin Dobson in *The Dictionary of National Biography*—been represented as born at Ratisbon, in 1733. On his tomb in Kew can be read the statement that he "died November 11, 1810, aged 87 years," which points to his having been born in 1723. But, in the absence of other evidence, this date seems too early.

Zoffany was one of the numerous foreign artists who, in the middle of the eighteenth century, were attracted to this country by the development of taste and connoisseurship in England. On the whole, the advent of these aliens

must be looked upon as advantageous, since they gave firmness and weight to the English tradition without having turned the native school aside from its original line of advance. Johann Zoffany (or Zoffanij) was a Bohemian Jew whose father was a cabinet-maker and decorator in Prague, and afterwards Court Architect in Ratisbon to the Prince of Thurn and Taxis. What is reported of the early life of the future painter gives a tantalising suggestion of picturesque adventure in the best eighteenth-century tradition.

Apprenticed as a boy to a maker of religious pictures, called Speer, at the age of thirteen, Zoffany "borrowed" a substantial sum in gold by breaking open his father's desk. Jumping upon a timber-raft on the Danube, he floated down to Vienna, and made his way to Rome, where he studied painting. Ultimately returning to Germany, he married a priest's niece with a small fortune of her own. His wedded life was unhappy, and he started for London, about the age of twenty-six (or thirty-eight !), "with some trifle short of a hundred pounds of his wife's money," with which, as he reported long afterwards, "I commenced Maccaroni, bought a suit *à la mode*, a gold watch and a gold-headed cane." These purchases were most injudicious, and the young gentleman seems to have had deplorable views regarding the cash of his relatives, but the final touch is very pleasing. Zoffany is the typical Maccaroni among the painters of his time.

But, even now, Dr. Williamson has little but gossip to depend upon. The date 1761 is fixed by a drawing signed and dated in that year. Horace Walpole says that the Maccaroni Club of a year or two later "is composed of all the travelled young men, who wear long curls and spying glasses." In the National Portrait Gallery's picture our travelled young man certainly wears very long curls, and has an air of infinite foppishness. This

could not survive the hundred pounds, and the next light thrown on the ingenuous alien is the following passage—detestably vivacious, it is true, but probably accurate. Pasquin says :—

"He lodged in the attic tenement of a Mr. Lyons, a kind of Hebrew, who resided in Shire Lane, near Temple Bar; his fortunes were then so low that his cates were more scarce than rare. The harp of his fathers was hung on a willow in the desert, and there was no musick in his soul. At this eventful epoch the heavy clouds which darkened his existence began to pass away: he saw the promised Canaan in a vision, and his nerves were restrung by fortitude."

In plainer words, he was introduced to Wilson, by whom he was employed to paint draperies, and by Rimbault to decorate clocks. In the former capacity he was discovered by Garrick, and he "now journied through life on a path of roses." Zoffany rapidly discovered the talent which accompanied him through the rest of his career, namely, the knack of painting lively and natural groups of actors and actresses on the stage. Dr. Williamson has proved that Lord Durham's picture of Garrick and Mrs. Cibber was exhibited at the new Society of Artists so early as 1762, and he gives a reproduction of this admirable work, in which all the characteristics of Zoffany's intimate and genial art are displayed.

Dr. Williamson, however, does not mention, what is surely of interest, that "The Farmer's Return from London," a scene from which is here illustrated, was written by Garrick. The original quarto has a frontispiece by Hogarth, who thus comes into rivalry with Zoffany, who owed so much to his example. Dr. Williamson quotes Walpole's remark that Zoffany's design was "better than Hogarth's,"

without apparently understanding it, perhaps through not recollecting the design in the quarto. From this time forwards the career of Zoffany is more and more clear to us, illuminated by the dates of his numerous portraits, groups, and compositions. We do not find that he ever competed successfully, or even endeavoured to compete, with Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney in attracting the most prominent public characters of the day to his studio, but he had a very large clientèle among the country squires of England, in whose houses Lady Victoria Manners has actively and successfully searched for specimens.

After ten years industriously spent in painting, the fever of travel once more seized the Bohemian artist, and he formed the project of visiting the South Seas in company no less distinguished than that of Captain Cook. Sir Joseph Banks was to be of the party, and Zoffany was to accompany the expedition as limner. The Navy Board, however, would provide no ship better than one so unseaworthy that the pilot declined to take charge of her farther than the Nore, which would be an inconspicuous fragment of a voyage to Tahiti. A violent quarrel broke out between Banks and the Navy Board, with the result that the former withdrew, and Zoffany, who had spent over £1000 in elaborate preparations for the expedition, was left with all his objects upon his hands. But travel he must, so he determined to go to Italy, sold the villa he had built on the Thames, and settled with great éclat at Florence.

In the autumn of 1779 he returned once more to London. He took a house in Albemarle Street, and another close by the water's edge at Strand-on-the-Green; the latter residence still exists, little altered, if at all. Here we may call up before our fancy the shallop which lay anchored opposite, on which the ostentatious painter organised his music parties, when his servants were put into liveries of scarlet and gold with blue facings, and "several harps"

contended on the deck with a harpsichord and various other musical instruments. Of these concerts on the river there are many records in paint, the most valuable being the group of the Sharp family in their barge, with Fulham church in the background. The composition of this work is perhaps a little crowded, but the treatment of the individual heads is excessively clever, and as a record of refined Georgian manners the picture is beyond price. It is beautifully reproduced by Dr. Williamson, and alone would justify the publication of this monograph.

Filled with dreams of "limitless gold and lacs of rupees," Zoffany set sail for India in 1783. Here he painted nabobs and nawabs, cock-fighters and colonels, Governor-generals, and Maharajahs, to his heart's content. He seems to have been curiously affected by the Oriental arts, and his portrait of the Maratha chief, Sindhia, in the plate here (p. 96) is exactly like a genuine Indian picture. This is said to be the only work of European art which is now an object of adoration; it is preserved in a small pagoda near Poonah. All was brilliant success in India, but on the return voyage, in 1790, the vessel was wrecked on the Andaman Islands; the experiences of the passengers were almost too horrible for credence, and before they were saved Zoffany was struck down by paralysis. He recovered, and went on painting for many years, but he never was again the man he had been.

Dr. Williamson has shown such an infinity of research in the pages of this magnificent volume that I hesitate to suggest one line of investigation which he might have carried out in greater detail. Zoffany was a close and eager student of the stage, and his theatrical groups, in which his part is often displayed at its highest point of eloquence and adroitness, have a unique value as throwing light on our theatrical history. Dr. Williamson is scornful of the plays of the period, and declared that they are

"dead." This report of their death, like that of Mark Twain, may prove exaggerated. Two plates here represent Garrick and William Parsons in "Lethe," but I do not see that there is in the text any suggestion of the date of these two pictures, nor of what "Lethe" was. It would have been worth while to explain that "Lethe" was a farce by Garrick, first brought out in 1740, and then revived, with the addition of "Lord Chalkstone," for Mrs. Clive's benefit in 1756. Neither of these occasions could have any connection with Zoffany, but "Lethe" was again revived before the King and Queen in 1777, and there can be no doubt that this is the date of the two pictures.

Again, Mr. Evan Charteris' admirable portrait of King in the part of Lord Ogleby (that "fleeting and fugacious being"), in "The Clandestine Marriage" of the elder Colman, one of the best of Zoffany's single figures, must have been painted when the play was brought out at Drury Lane in 1766. I do not find it noticed here that Samuel Foote's (he is strangely called "—— Foote" in the index) "Maid of Bath" was performed in 1771, though this supplies the date for the painting; and similarly, the "Village Lawyer," attributed to Macready, must belong to 1795. But enough of this, which Dr. Williamson may regard as purely pedantic. The comic drama of that age is very far from being so contemptible as people who have never examined it suppose. "The West Indian" and "The Clandestine Marriage," to take two examples almost at random, are amusing and well-written pieces which have no smaller merit in their own kind than Zoffany's pictures have in his. I live in hope of seeing these and other Georgian sentimental comedies revived by the members of some drama society, who will find Zoffany of great help in the staging.

Zoffany is not in the very first line even of the painters of his own age, but he has an independent value which will preserve his reputation as long as that of any of them.

He is curiously unequal, as we may see for ourselves if we examine the plates in Dr. Williamson's volume, nearly two hundred in number. He is sometimes very stiff in his drawing, and clumsy in his composition, while he is particularly unfortunate now and then in his wooden treatment of the human leg. But in his best groups, such as that of "The Warren Hastings Family," he contrives to give each of his heads an individual character which his most eminent contemporaries could not surpass. Occasionally, as in the "Wandering Minstrels" at Parma, and in "The Porter and the Hare," he seems to me to be competing consciously with Murillo.

But his chief characteristic was his pleasure in transcribing the upper middle-class life of his day in its intimate recreations. In this he was encouraged by his extraordinary fondness for brilliant colour, appropriate to an age when the gentlemen were no less gay than the ladies in their sumptuous velvets and satins. But one opportunity has been neglected. It must be a matter of lasting regret that Zoffany omitted to paint for posterity Dr. Oliver Goldsmith in his coat of Tyrian bloom and blue silk breeches.

PHILIP MASSINGER

PHILIP MASSINGER

It was high time that some one should retrieve the reputation of a great writer to whom the nineteenth century was markedly ungrateful. We have never been confronted by a direct attack on the work of Massinger, although Coleridge and, long afterwards, Leslie Stephen said things about him which produced a lowering effect on his readers, but rather by an advance in height of all his immediate contemporaries while he has remained stationary. There was nothing violent, nothing volcanic about the candid and sensible genius of Massinger, and he offered little opportunity for those preposterous raptures which have been squandered on Ford and Tourneur. Hence, while they and other portents of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age have been welcomed with romantic fury, Massinger has been, not exactly repudiated, but let alone. Those who marched with flags to fling themselves at the feet of Webster merely touched their sombreros lightly as they hurried past the figure of Massinger. To-day it is not a critic of dramatic literature, but a professor of Greek (who is also a Canon of the cathedral of Durham) who brings forward an apology for Massinger which is full of instruction, and as admirably persuasive in tone as it is modest and moderate in statement. Mr. Cruickshank's volume is a contribution to knowledge and taste which claims a substantial welcome. No student of our old drama can afford to neglect it.

The depreciation of Massinger is commonly attributed to Charles Lamb, and Mr. Cruickshank speaks repeatedly of Lamb's "unfairness" and chilliness. I think this

is somewhat exaggerated; Coleridge is "unfair" to Massinger, but if we look closely we see in Lamb, not injustice, so much as inadvertence. Mr. Cruickshank has not called attention to the passage in which Lamb, writing to Coleridge so early as 1796, demands his admiration of beauties in the language of *A Very Woman*. At that time he admired Beaumont and Fletcher next after Shakespeare, but he adds that "Massinger treads close on their heels."

As Lamb advanced in knowledge many rivals for his partiality pushed in, and Massinger ceased to occupy his thoughts. Still, when in 1808 he published *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, the book which has had a far more durable effect upon opinion than any other of its class, Lamb gave long extracts from nine of Massinger's best plays. It is true that he projects but few of those notes of enthusiasm which he gladly spares for his favourites, and that he has a whimsical outburst at the end, where he amazingly contends that Rowley and Middleton "had both of them finer geniuses than" Massinger. Finally, when Lamb published the *Extracts from the Garrick Plays*, in 1827, he omitted Massinger altogether, but as he was dealing almost exclusively with minor writers, this was perhaps a compliment.

The opinion of Charles Lamb is a matter of important conjecture, because, for the last hundred years, that opinion has carried preponderating weight in all our critical judgments. Lamb spoke of Massinger in 1796 as having become difficult to procure, but in 1805 Gifford produced a handsome and competent edition which placed the playwright on the shelves of every gentleman's library. It has been suggested that the political hatred of Gifford indulged in by all the Liberal poets and critics affected their attitude to Massinger as Gifford's protégé, but Gifford also edited Ben Jonson, Ford, and Shirley. We need not be so ingenious. The fact is that Massinger had suited the temper of the

eighteenth century better than any other dramatist except Shakespeare. The admiration of the other Elizabethan and Jacobean poets had not yet set in.

Well known is Landor's outburst about the oak of Arden with the mushrooms gathered round its base. To sober eighteenth-century judgment there seemed nothing outrageous in regarding Ford and Marston as toadstools, and poisonous toadstools into the bargain. Shakespeare was not so much the divine leader of a choir as a god among pygmies. Meanwhile, Massinger, with what Isaac Reed in 1782 called his "vast treasury of entertainment and delight," was thoroughly admired. He stood, a graceful birch-tree between the Oak of Arden and the toadstools. In his indignant assertion of the genius of such "toadstools" as Webster and Heywood and Dekker, it would naturally not occur to Lamb as necessary to dwell upon the merit of Massinger, and so that poet withdrew into the background.

People who argue that Shakespeare cannot have existed because we know so little about his life, will be pained to observe that we know still less about Massinger's. He was born at Salisbury in 1584, perhaps in Wilton itself, since his father was house-steward to successive Earls of Pembroke. Here is an opportunty for the builders of mares' nests to allege that *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* was really written by William Herbert, Shakespeare's friend. We believe that Massinger, after a period at Oxford, went up to London and lived for more than thirty years by revising old plays and writing a multitude of new ones. He certainly died in Southwark, and was buried on March 18, 1640, in St. Saviour's, "a stranger" and "accompanied by comedians."

Professor Cruickshank has been unable to add to this extremely meagre record, which he has stripped of some rags of fable. He is very cautious in conjecture, but he develops a pleasant theory that perhaps Massinger studied

medicine. Doctors are very frequently introduced into his plays, and usually in a flattering manner, unlike the customary gibes of the playwrights from Molière to Mr. Shaw. For instance, in *A Very Woman*, we read an address to a surgeon, beginning :—

> " Rise, Thou bright star of knowledge,
> Thou honour of Thy art, Thou help of nature,
> Thou glory of our academics ! "

Such language must have been gratifying to a profession which was more often applied to than appreciated, but it might be suggested that Massinger's marked partiality for doctors arose not from himself having been a medical student, but from his having been cured of some dangerous illness by a physician.

In general, Mr. Cruikshank adheres to the assignation of Massinger's part in the works of other poets which was very carefully made by Boyle forty years ago. Critics have not gone further than that without having to retrace their steps. As every one knows who has approached the subject, the constant collaboration of our old playwrights introduces an element of hopeless uncertainty into the analysis of their works. In unskilful hands this endless guessing grows very tiresome, and we suffered unspeakably from the ingenuity of Furnivall and Fleay. Mr. Cruickshank, happily, has no great appetite for these divagations, and he has found enough to do in examining the magnificent tragi-comedies which no one disputes to be Massinger's.

I say " tragi-comedies " advisedly, because I conceive his civilised and reasonable genius to have been always at its happiest when it foresaw that its tragic story would have a serene ending. He is the most Shakespearean of his generation in this respect, and I am glad to find Sir Sidney Lee dwelling upon " the almost magical success " with which Massinger echoes Shakespeare's tones. Professor Cruickshank develops this theme with persistency,

and gives us a whole bouquet of passages in which the younger has not so much imitated as evinced his appreciation of the beauties of the elder.

The only fault of Mr. Cruickshank's book, so far as I can discover, is one very rare at the present day—namely, that it is too short. His examination of the works of Massinger is wide without being wearisome, and the illustration of the poet's variety and range of style admirable. Technical questions are relegated to a series of appendices, so as not to disturb the general reader in his perusal of the text. The two points on which I should welcome a certain expansion are these. In the first place, the relation of Massinger to the French stage of his time is a matter to which, I think, no critic in either country has given attention. The two dramatic literatures were then running side by side for a few years, after having been leagues apart in Jodelle and Marlowe, and before the final rupture.

During this period there were two poets who came, I think, nearer to one another than any other two French and English poets have come before or since—I mean Rotrou and Massinger. I wish that Mr. Cruickshank would follow up this hint. Rotrou was the younger, but more than twenty-five of his plays were acted, and I think printed, before Massinger died. Compare *The Virgin Martyr* with *Saint Genest*; the parallel is very curious. Here is Rotrou's own description of his aim in poetry :—

> " La douceur du discours, la beauté des pensées,
> Les rimes, qui ne sont ni faibles ni forcées,
> Et la forme du style ont de si doux appas
> Que le plus grand censeur ne s'en defendrait pas."

For " rimes " read " blank verse," and what could more perfectly describe the ardent but sedate sensibility of Massinger's genius?

The other point on which I should welcome some expansion

is the effect of Massinger's plays on the drama of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They began to be revived in the beginning of George III.'s reign, when no other Elizabethan dramatist but Shakespeare was tolerated. *The Roman Actor* was particularly successful, and *The City Madam* (altered as *Riches*, and "judiciously pruned" by Sir James Bland Burgess) had several runs at Drury Lane. Playgoers declared that "there cannot in language be found anything stronger than the effect produced" by the magic portrait of Sophia in *The Picture*. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* was frequently revived, and Byron witnessed it with "an agony of reluctant tears and a choking shudder." It is to be remembered, however, that Kean was playing Sir Giles Overreach and that Byron was often hysterical after dinner.

The result of all this is to be seen, I think, in the dramatic blank verse of the Kean and Siddons period, which professed to be Shakespearean, but which was much more closely modelled on Massinger. Any one who glances at the once-popular plays of writers like Maturin and Sheridan Knowles must acknowledge this, and as these writers set the fashion in theatrical blank verse for more than half a century, the influence of Massinger seems to be more considerable than is commonly acknowledged.

One of Mr. Cruickshank's appendices deals at full length, and for the first time, with a subject very interesting to me—namely, with the quartos which I possess containing corrections believed to be in Massinger's handwriting. In 1877, when he was breaking up his home in Clifton, John Addington Symonds gave me a thick volume containing eight first editions of Massinger. In handing me the book, Symonds pointed out to me that six of the plays had contemporary corrections in ink, and he said that there was a "tradition" that they were in the handwriting of Massinger himself. The volume had come from the Harbord

library at Gunton, in Norfolk, and was sold, with other old books, at the death of the fourth Lord Suffield in 1853. Symonds bought it of an Oxford bookseller when he was an undergraduate.

I have no skill in MSS., but in 1882 Swinburne made a careful examination of the corrections, and again in 1883, when he urged that they should be published. He spoke about them to A. H. Bullen, who also examined them, and agreed with Swinburne that they were made by Massinger himself. Bullen had some thought then of publishing a Massinger, in which he would have recorded the emendations. Nothing, however, was done with them, but at last Mr. Cruickshank has copied and printed them all. The copy of *The Duke of Milan* has a MS. "M" at the end, which may be Massinger's signed initial. I am determined to believe that it is.

MISS MITFORD

MISS MITFORD

Long a prominent figure, the smiling and ringletted presence of Mary Russell Mitford has been fading into the background since Mr. L'Estrange published his final edition of her *Friendships* in 1882. She has now been for so long "taken for granted" that it is high time to reconsider her place in literature, which is not inconsiderable.

She was born when Gibbon and Burke were still alive, and she retained to the last a touch of eighteenth-century precision. But essentially she was a pioneer of the nineteenth, and in her unobtrusive way she was a creator of a new mode of writing which is more current to-day than ever it was. An early admirer called her "a prose Cowper, without his gloom or bitterness." Certainly Mary Mitford, in all her difficult existence, never found time to be either bitter or gloomy; and she was so conspicuously sane that it seems hard to compare her with a disordered intellect. But the parallel has this measure of truth in it, that both Cowper and she excelled when they threw off all traces of contemporary pomposity, and fixed their attention on intimate rustic incidents, on what used to be called "rural delineation."

Miss Mitford's contribution to English literature was a nervous, buoyant mode of bringing up a country scene before us in pure and sprightly prose. She is minutely picturesque, as the painter Birket Foster was in the next generation. She takes us along winding lanes under the shaken blossoms of the blackthorn, where we meet a company of little, rosy, smiling girls, with straw baskets

in their hands, accompanied by "a sedate and venerable donkey." Nobody had rendered this sort of rural scene quite so vividly until she began to write, and since the publication of *Our Village* everybody has been able to do it.

Mary Russell Mitford was born in Hampshire, in 1787. Her parents crossed over into Berkshire when she was a little child, and she died in that county in 1855. No life could be more stationary, and her composure accorded with her character, which was singularly serene. She said of herself—it is part of a beautiful passage in *The Young Market-Women*—"I am the very bond-slave of habit—love old friends, old faces, old books, old scenery, old flowers, old associations of every sort and kind." If she was accustomed to an object, and had known it all her life, she could see no fault in it. This is the only way to explain her extraordinary, her exasperating optimism, which was exercised upon all sorts of unworthy subjects, but most of all upon her dreadful father. Dr. Mitford was a person whose faults would seem exaggerated in comic drama. He began as a young physician without a practice, who, when "a brief career of dissipation had reduced his pecuniary resources to the lowest possible ebb," married an ugly, unprotected orphan, much older than himself, who possessed a large fortune at her own command. This latter he soon dispersed in extravagance and ostentation, never attempting to do one hour's work in the rest of his long life. He had rough manners and a loud way of talking, and he was a confirmed gambler, but he had a certain insinuating charm.

His doting daughter says that he was "one of the finest whist-players of his time," but his skill did not prevent him from constantly losing. Just when he had run through his wife's fortune his little daughter of nine years old (Mary Russell was their only offspring) rescued him from a debtor's prison by winning £20,000 in a lottery. This he promised to settle on the child, but he did nothing of the

kind. By the time she was grown up he had wasted most of it in personal indulgence. In process of time he lived wholly upon the labours of his daughter's pen. He was a selfish rascal without a virtue, except a surprising beauty of face, which he preserved to a very old age. He was far more like Harold Skimpole than poor Leigh Hunt ever was; and this detestable creature was flattered, adored, and exonerated to the last by the daughter whose whole career was sacrificed to his selfishness. "It's human nature; but, if so, oh! isn't human nature low?" as the poet exclaims.

Mary Mitford had been a precocious child, excessively given to books and to conversation with grown-up people. When she was fifteen it occurred to her to write, and she composed an essay on "Balloons," which has not been preserved. She began to write with great hesitation, due to the fact that she had been trained in the taste of the eighteenth century, and was already shaken by the new Romantic movement. The publication of Campbell's poems in 1809 was a critical event in her career; she wrote that she would give ten years of her life to have written "Hohenlinden," and that "Gertrude of Wyoming" was "the most exquisite of all human productions." She thought she had found her mission, and she plunged with great assiduity into the publication of verse, producing from 1810 onwards in rapid succession six or seven little volumes.

The first of these was savagely pulled to pieces by the *Quarterly Review*, an incident which, so far from depressing Mary Mitford, proved to be her baptism of fire, since it turned her from an amateur into a professional writer. All sorts of eminent persons—Coleridge, Lord Holland, Tom Moore, Campbell himself—revised her poems in MS. They were successful with the public; a clergyman pretended to have written them; and by the time she was seven-and-twenty she was "quite a little goddess." She

"blushed like a boiled lobster" when the Dukes of Kent and Sussex drank "Thanks to Miss Mitford" at a public dinner, with a flourish of drums and trumpets. All this was in 1814, while Byron was fluttering the dovecots with his Grecian tales, and she was positively his rival. The odd thing is that this voluble output of popular verse had no real significance, except so far as it prepared her for prose. Of Miss Mitford's odes, and tales, and songs, and epistles not a single one has survived.

She herself felt the futility of her poems, and she left off writing for several years. But the family, owing to Dr. Mitford's unspeakable conduct, fell into dire poverty. Mary Russell, whom Mr. L'Estrange aptly compares with the Doll's Dressmaker in *Our Mutual Friend*, had to take up her pen to support the old wretch in his idleness. She turned to prose, and she made a careful study of her elder contemporaries, Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Opie; but the influence of Gilbert White was stronger with her. Her own peculiar talent had been revealed in a letter (dated April 5, 1812) to her admirable friend, Sir William Elford, that amateur who excelled in all the professions. In this letter she describes in the inimitable manner which was later to become identified with *Our Village*, a ramble in the Berkshire fields. But for the time being this gift of hers was in abeyance, and she left her callow goslings and frisking lambs and laughing children for more sententious subjects.

It is not quite clear how she paid her way, but evidently she made a small regular income by her pen, and by editing keepsakes and annuals. If there was any margin after the butcher and the baker had been met, "the naughtiest of all naughty papas" (this is the harshest epithet she ever brought herself to use) immediately spent it on luxuries. In 1820 the Mitfords, who were now "almost penniless," were obliged to move into a labourer's cottage in the

hamlet of Three Mile Cross, and Mary, at her wits' end for a little cash, bethought her that if Sheridan Knowles had made money by *Virginius*, why should not she write a play? Thus began her brief, but very surprising dramatic career, during which she managed to produce, without a failure, and with one brilliant success (*Rienzi*), half a dozen blank-verse tragedies, on the proceeds of which she kept the pot boiling.

But before this she had begun to work the far more richly-laden mine of rural prose, prefigured in her letter to Elford. She expanded her observations of country life into little papers, which she offered in succession to the leading magazines. Strangely enough, though she had by this time a very wide circle of admirers, the form of these papers being novel, the editors were suspicious, and they were repeatedly rejected. It seems—this is not quite clear—to have been Charles Lamb who perceived the enchanting merit of these pastorals, and who urged them on the editor of the *London Magazine*. They began to appear there, were universally liked, and this was the beginning of *Our Village*, on which Miss Mitford was engaged for the next twelve years, publishing the chapters serially, and then collecting them (between 1824 and 1832) in five successive volumes. To these followed the three volumes of *Belford Regis*, in which Reading is the local centre.

All this mass of buoyant, sunshiny literature, full of laughter and wit, all this conscious worship of the delights of a beautiful world, was composed in a cottage, by an invalid who, though she was never heard to complain, had afterwards to confess that during the long period of her authorship "fear and anxiety had never been absent" from her home. In 1837 this state of things was somewhat relieved by a civil list pension. Even that meant a pine-apple for Papa. He died at last, at a very great age, and his daughter was inconsolable.

The most remarkable episode in Miss Mitford's life was her friendship with Elizabeth Barrett, whom she met at Kenyon's house in 1836. Her account of the meeting is classic. They were violently attracted to each other, despite the disparity of their ages, and they immediately plunged into an intimacy which death alone destroyed. Miss Mitford wrote that her attitude to Miss Barrett was that of a mother to a son; she shared her intellectual ambitions, and constantly urged her on to more daring experiments. But mothers do not always like their sons to marry, and it was unfortunate that when Robert Browning came upon the scene Mary Mitford did not rise to the occasion. It appears that E. B. B., who was morbidly sensitive, had just reached the point of divulging her amazing secret, when Miss Mitford, whether innocently or maliciously, said something derogatory about Browning. The quivering poetess immediately became a fountain sealed, and her affection for her old friend, whom she usually found "sprinkled, as to the soul, with meadow dews," suffered a temporary abatement.

Miss Mitford discovered Miss Barrett at this time to be strangely "perverse and capricious," but whether she suspected the truth, seems to be uncertain. Probably she did, for when the amazing marriage came off, she showed neither petulance nor surprise. The friendship was resumed, and it was Miss Mitford—and this showed a forgiving spirit—who preserved and privately printed at Reading the *Sonnets*, afterwards styled, "from the Portuguese," in 1847. In the new excitements of Italy and an adoring husband Mrs. Browning a little resented the "powerful vitality, rustling all over with laces and flowers," of her tyrannical old female adorer in Berkshire, but there fell no breach between them, and when, in January 1855, in consequence of a carriage accident, Miss Mitford died, there was sincere and lasting sorrow in the household at Casa Guidi.

FREDERICK LOCKER

FREDERICK LOCKER

No son-in-law was ever more solicitous than is Mr. Birrell to keep alive the memory of his wife's father. Ever since the death of Locker-Lampson he has, by persistent and judicious editing and annotating, prevented the possibility of our forgetting the accomplished author of *London Lyrics*. I do not know that he has ever done this more efficiently than in the introduction to the 1900 Appendix to the Rowfant Library, but that is not a book which is in every one's hand. Perhaps I am mistaken, but in the eighty-four pages of purely biographical matter with which his *Character Sketch* opens, I trace a little fatigue, as though the pious task had been repeated rather frequently.

I am no enemy to divagation in its proper place, and Mr. Birrell is a master of the disjointed style. Nevertheless, I think he is somewhat slow in getting to his subject in the beginning of this character sketch, and a little too ready to wander from his—I admit—rather elusive theme. It is difficult to see that the Nelson, Washington, and Cobbett letters have any place in the picture. This discursiveness excepted, nothing but commendation can be given to the sympathetic and accurate picture of a very graceful figure. But there is no index to a book which pre-eminently needs one, and for this monstrous omission the publishers ought to be led out and shot.

Mr. Birrell claims our respect for Locker on the ground of five things which he did, each of them solitary, for he was an instance of quality, not quantity. The five are a

single volume of poems, a single anthology, a collection of quotations, an autobiography, and the formation of a library. Every candid person acquainted with the facts must admit that he performed these five acts well; we may wonder that he did not essay some of them twice. Mr. Birrell makes a brave show in favour of all five, but I confess that they do not appear to me of equal value.

I do not know how it is possible not to give the primacy to the poems, which were first published, in 1857, as *London Lyrics*, and were added to and manipulated in numerous editions almost to the end of Locker's life, yet remained essentially his one conspicuous contribution to letters. Comment is useless when Mr. Austin Dobson has summed up, once for all, the quality of Locker's verse :—

> " Apollo made, one April day,
> A new thing in the rhyming way;
> Its turn was neat, its wit was clear,
> It wavered 'twixt a smile and tear;
> Then Momus gave a touch satiric,
> And it became a ' London Lyric.' "

I mourn that Mr. Birrell quotes this sexain so inaccurately as to deprive it of much of its merit.

The present age has completely lost the delicate art of *vers de société*, which reached an extremity of elegance in Praed, whose disciple—though not whose imitator—Locker was. We may study the development of these exercises on the lighter lyre, through Thackeray, Calverley, Locker, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Austin Dobson, and J. K. Stephen. With the last-mentioned the art declined and disappeared, since in the pointed and sardonic verse of Mr. H. Belloc we have an entirely different thing, and go back almost to the roughness of *Hudibras* and Oldham. The Victorian *vers de société* was as light as thistledown, and if it contained a thorn of satire, the sharpness was lifted on the softest of airy vans.

No one celebrates the gaiety and sadness of Rotten Row now as Locker did fifty years ago :—

> " For where is now the courtly troop
> That once rode laughing by ?
> I miss the curls of Cantilupe,
> The laugh of Lady Di ;
> They all could laugh from night to morn,
> And Time has laughed them all to scorn."

If any haughty young Georgian sneers at this manner of writing, let him try to reproduce the elegant pathos of it. He will find the trick no easy one.

Frederick Locker was often drawn and painted, but there exists one consummate portrait of him, which Mr. Birrell wisely reproduces in the volume before me. It was executed in 1872 by George Du Maurier, and it is one of the happiest works of the kind ever engraved. It brings the London Lyrist before me exactly as I knew him first, two or three years later, with his slight upright figure in the impeccable frock-coat, standing with his hands behind his back, and warming his coat-tails before the fire at 25, Chester Street, while he listened with indulgence, benevolent and sardonic, to the outpourings of a visitor. There were many points of moral resemblance between Du Maurier and Locker, and this portrait is a triumph of sympathy. But the poet was less self-sustained than the painter, and was more completely dependent upon society.

No one can conceive Frederick Locker on a desert island, unless, like the Admirable Crichton, he had a group of persons of quality to take care of. He was in the unusual condition of having more pride than vanity, and he felt it no sacrifice to yield the latter to the caprices of men whom he knew to be greater than himself. He was not the dupe of their foibles, but he loved their greatness, and he was well content to play second-fiddle in their orchestra. Indeed, he wore humility as a kind of shield, and sometimes rather

overdid the modest air which opened every door to his delicate pertinacity. The man who satisfies a ceaseless intellectual curiosity probably squeezes more out of life in the long run than any one else. Locker was the type of the good-natured spectator in the theatre of London society, with the addition, which lifted him to a higher level than the mere Creevys and Seniors, that he could on occasion take the stage with a very pretty and perfect little performance of his own.

Locker's relations with the big-wigs of his time, on the respectful but self-respecting basis which I have indicated, are pleasantly illustrated by the letters which Mr. Birrell has printed. They display him on familiar terms with some of the most formidable figures of the age—with Tennyson, whose son married Locker's daughter; with Froude, in a very bad temper, "like a dog with a tin-kettle tied to its tail, and all the old women in the parish shrieking and throwing stones at me"; with Thackeray, ingeniously explaining away the awkwardness of being black-balled for a club; with George Eliot, on the high horse, deploring "that it is my habit never to return visits." These letters, with those from Browning, Rossetti, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, and the rest, are not very important in themselves, most of them, in fact, being notes of civility, but they show what an intimate fireside place was reserved for the London Lyrist at all these exclusive hearths.

By far the best of the letters are those from the poets of Locker's own class, with whom he preserved a friendship which was wholly untinged by jealousy. Those from Oliver Wendell Holmes and C. S. Calverley are the best of all. Locker's association with the former began as early as 1858, when Holmes responded with cordial fulness to the first little gift of *London Lyrics*, in whose author, indeed, he might well feel that he had found the most skilful of all his disciples. Calverley, who was ten years

Locker's junior, appears on the scene in 1868, and his early letters, before the accident which clouded his luminous intelligence, are of singular interest from a technical point of view.

The fame of a collector rarely survives the dispersal of his collections, but Locker continues to be proverbial among those who have bought books with fervour and discrimination. To Mr. Birrell's account of the Rowfant Library I must, however, be allowed to offer a few supplementary remarks. In his final summary of the achievement of Frederick Locker I should have been glad to see inserted some more exact account of the character and history of his famous collection of books. Mr. Birrell does not mention that it was sold in December 1904, to Mr. E. D. Church, of New York, for £40,000. The books were shipped to America intact, and Mr. Church then took from among them all that were suitable to his own taste. The rest he sold, and many of the treasures (for example, the noble copy of the Kilmarnock Burns and the unique "trial-books" given by Tennyson to Locker) came back to England.

After the death of Mr. Church, his library was in turn sold intact to Mr. H. E. Huntington, so that the best Rowfant specimens have been absorbed into the still more remarkable collection of the last-named bibliophile. Mr. Birrell quotes with indignation the statement of an enemy that "most of [Locker's] rarest books are miserable copies," and says, very justly, that "spitefulness here degenerates into falsehood." He is, however, not wholly aware of the opportunity given to the blasphemy by some of the books themselves. The condition of the Rowfant Library was in the main poor. The reason of this was twofold: the larger portion of the early literature had been acquired while Locker was a Government clerk with slender means; and in those days "condition"—now all-important—was disregarded.

Locker had an amusingly exaggerated idea of the value of his name. He once told a collector that he considered that if he bought a poor copy of a rare book, or a print deprived of margins, and then mended it and wrote a statement upon it, his autograph inscription would fully compensate for the defect. This, of course, was a delusion; and the family acted very wisely in selling the library *en bloc* to a private purchaser. In the auction-room the inequality of "condition" would have sorely affected the prices. When the volumes Mr. Church did not wish to keep were sent back to England on approval, an honest bibliophile, devoid of all sentimentality, was asked by another collector to give an opinion on the *Comus* of 1637, to which Mr. Birrell rashly calls our particular attention. The reply was what Victorian contemporaries used to call a "stunner," for the expert curtly reported "the *Comus* is a miserable, worn-out, defective Beast!"

I believe that a perfectly candid description of the Rowfant books as a whole would say that they were genuine, often rare, mostly perfect, many repaired, a few very fine indeed, but in their average condition poor. I am afraid that Mr. Birrell will look upon this summary as devoid of enthusiasm, but it is set down carefully and without malice. When the worst has been said, the Rowfant Library was a magnificent performance for a man of Locker's means.

Mr. Birrell does well to emphasise the kindly side of the poet's nature, and his determination to please friends. "He really took too much pains about it, exposing himself to rebuffs and misunderstandings; but he was not without his rewards." He loved to give gifts, and he gave generally accompanied them with a few words of delicate compliment, watching the recipient through his eye-glass, to taste, like a gourmet, the little start of amusement and surprise which his courtesy awakened. There must have been scores of

these little tokens of kindness in existence. Here is one, which has never been published, written in a copy of *London Lyrics*, which he gave me in 1876 :—

> " Our Poets, write they ill or well,
> Complain their poems do not sell;
> And yet how often we are told
> The Poet does not rhyme for Gold.
> I'm satisfied that gold is dross,
> And so I *give* my rhymes to Gosse."

Frederick Locker—whom I find it impossible to think of or to write of as Locker-Lampson—was a very characteristic figure in the social pattern of his time. But he was more than a welcome visitor at every fashionable house and a presence which awakened excitement in every auction-room; he was a man of letters, of exquisite probity, and a loyal and unexacting friend. In his quiet way he was an atom of personality as penetrating as a grain of musk.

THE FOX IN SONG

THE FOX IN SONG

Although hunting is not allowed to disturb the first day of the week, fox-hunters sit round the fire on Sunday afternoons, with a decanter of port and a canister of tobacco, and review the tumult of the chase. Before they part, they often sing "John Peel," which, though no poem in the strict sense, has for ninety years past been the most popular hunting-song in the English language. It is strange that fox-hunting has not contributed more than it has to the treasure of our poetry, for no other pastime can compare with it in colour, in rustic beauty, in natural and human interest. There is a very considerable prose literature on the subject, none of it better than Peter Beckford's admirable *Thoughts on Hunting*, which has inspired many a thankless compilation since its first issue in 1781. Lord Willoughby de Broke has written a vigorous and elegant volume on Fox-Hunting, but no one has beaten Beckford. Mr. Tom Smith, Homeric hero of the great Nobottle Wood adventure, published about 1840 a sterling *Diary of a Huntsman* and *The Life of a Fox*. But these are classics of our prose, as Matthew Arnold would say.

The beginnings of regular fox-hunting in England seem to be wrapped up in mystery. Lord Wilton, in his *Sports and Pursuits*, dates the exclusive keeping of packs of fox-hounds "about the year 1750," which strikes me as very late, since the poet Somervile, "a squire well born and six foot tall," published his long, high-spirited poem in blank verse, "The Chase," in 1735. On the other hand, it is

true that the Cheshire Hunt, which has produced the best fox-hunting verse, did not begin until 1763, when it set up its headquarters at Tarporley, on the border of the Delamere Forest. Stags have inspired excellent songs, of which Davidson's "When the pods went pop" is doubtless the best. But the animal which animated the immortal prose of Surtees in "Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds" has been in verse neglected. There is Somervile, of whom I have just spoken, and there is Robert Lowth, who, in 1800, wrote a long poem on the famous Billesden Coplow run, which, it was said, would not be forgotten until "grass shall grow in winter in the streets of Melton Mowbray." There are the songs—not, alas! very melodious—by Mr. H. Cumberland-Bentley, the laureate of the Pytchley. It is a pity that Jorrocks never smote the cynegetic lyre. We are thrown back on Mr. Egerton-Warburton, who is joined to-day by Mr. Masefield.

Critics have never done justice to Rowland Egerton-Warburton, who was not merely a gallant gentleman of Cheshire, who rode on thoroughbred horses bred by himself, and hunted with the Tarporley Hounds until blindness overtook him at the close of a very long life, but was also a poet of originality and merit. I cannot forgive Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch for leaving him out of *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, where several pieces of a languid sentimentality might have made way for

"Stags in the forest lie, hares in the valley-o!
Web-footed otters are speared in the lochs;
Beasts of the chase that are not worth a Tally-ho!
All are surpassed by the gorse-cover fox!
Fishing (tho' pleasant)
I sing not at present,
Nor shooting the pheasant,
Nor fighting of cocks;
Song shall declare a way
How to drive care away,
Pain and despair away,
Hunting the fox."

or the vivid sapphics called "The Earth Stopper," or the vernacular of "Farmer Dobbin." Egerton-Warburton, of Arley Hall, in Cheshire, was a well-known character in the Tarporley Hunt long before his songs were published. The fox-hunters looked askance at

> "the Squire of Arley Hall,
> His pocket full of rigmarole, a-rhyming on them all,"

but at every meeting of the Old Tarporley he was called upon, as the local Pindar, to celebrate the feats of hound and horse. It was not until 1846 that his *Hunting Songs* were published, and a new and enlarged edition in 1859. They are excellent, and I have no patience with the criticism which is too "high-browed" to grant a place on Parnassus to "Hard-Riding Dick" and "Old Oulton Lowe."

If I have dwelt on these things, it is not from indifference to Mr. Masefield's *Reynard*, but because I am anxious to point out that the latest contribution to fox-hunting song follows the good old tradition of the chase. Whether Mr. Masefield has ever read Egerton-Warburton's *Tarwood* I do not know, but his own poem, with an added variety of colour and diction, follows on the track, or I should say on the run, of the sprightly octosyllabics which the Cheshire bard wrote in 1845. Egerton-Warburton sings :—

> "Ah! how shall I in song declare
> The riders who were foremost there?
> A fit excuse how shall I find
> For every rider left behind?"

and this exactly defines the first of Mr. Masefield's two cantos describing the meet at "The Cock and Pye," an ancient coaching hostelry full of highwayman traditions, at which the hounds met on a certain morning before charging at the fox in Ghost Heath Wood.

In his new poem Mr. Masefield returns to the exterior form of that prime favourite among his works, *The Everlasting Mercy*, but *Reynard* has not the curious philosophical character of so much of the author's verse, in which virtue is made to bluster like vice, and modesty is astonished at the breadth of its own coarseness. Here the poet is content to be purely descriptive. He paints, in a hundred vivid touches, a sort of Caldecott fresco of men in scarlet against a background of stablemen, local ladies, a maze of "horses' legs and poshay wheels," and the consummate beauty of "those feathery things," a crowd of hounds. We are given a series of portraits of the men and boys whom the meet draws together in the sturdy democracy of the Hunt, until the Master assumes his dictatorship, and "at his word, the tide is flowing" foxwards.

The poem is in two cantos or books, and the second of these deals with the sentiments and experience of Reynard. Shakespeare, wandering in his early youth past the farmyards of Warwickshire, was amused by "the fox, that lives by subtlety." To the fabulists, from generation to generation, Vulpes has been the type of crafty prudence, *ragino-hardus*, strong in judgment. But the psychology of Reynard has never been carried far enough, and Mr. Masefield has bravely essayed to reproduce it. We shall never know what the fox really thinks on these thrilling occasions, but it is doubtful if any one will get nearer to fathoming his emotions than Mr. Masefield has done :—

> "He thought, as he ran, of his old delight,
> In the wood in the moon in an April night;
> His happy hunting, his winter loving,
> The smell of things in the midnight roving,
> The look of his dainty-nosing, red,
> Clean-felled dam with her footpad's tread;
> Of his sire, so swift, so game, so cunning,
> With craft in his brain and power of running;
> Their fights of old, when his teeth drew blood;
> Now he was sick, with his coat all mud."

It would require much more space than I dare to occupy here to do justice to the exact observation of minute English character and scenery which animates this poem. If I make any reserve, it is that the varieties of type described are a little too numerous, and a little too uniform in technical handling. I do not know how Mr. Masefield, choosing to adopt the method he works in, could have avoided this, but there is a certain monotonous confusion produced in the mind by the brief and uniform presentment of one silhouette after another. I recollect no other poem in which the cinematograph effect is so persistently carried out. But I hesitate to hunt a fault in a poem which is full of English woodland beauty, which is human to the last degree, and which does magnificent justice to the most spirited of all our national sports. If the workmanship is in some places rather rough, be it remembered, in the weighty words of Mr. Tom Smith, that "to men who ride well, the wilder and stranger a country is, the more it is like fox-hunting."

THE SEPULCHRAL DEAN

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During the last twenty-five years the reputation of Donne as a poet has been steadily rising. He was ignored, or misrepresented, by the critics of the eighteenth century. By those of the beginning of the nineteenth he was consistently disregarded, except by Coleridge, who was much puzzled by characteristics which alternately attracted and repelled him, and who has left a series of disconnected notes which are very curious, but which illustrate the mind of Coleridge much more correctly than that of Donne. The biography of the great divine remained in much the same condition in which Izaak Walton had left it in the memoir, which is perhaps the most sparkling and the most picturesque life written in the seventeenth century, but which, though it will always remain, on its own merits, an English classic, is now discovered to have been seriously defective as to facts. Meanwhile, more and more attention was given to the poems of Donne, this branch of study culminating in the two volumes published at the Clarendon Press by Professor Grierson in 1912. In that compilation the task of editing Donne's very difficult text—peculiarly difficult because his verse was almost entirely posthumous—was performed with an elegant erudition, which seems as final as the finite labours of scholarship can ever be.

Through our latest generation the ever-increasing fame of Donne as a poet has not been founded so much upon pedantic curiosity or on the appetising problems which it affords the learned as upon the extraordinary attraction

which he offers to young readers of a serious and enthusiastic turn of mind. His verse is dark and often cryptic, but it is the darkness of the thunderstorm bearing in the heart of its gloom a core of unquenchable fire. There is no other great English writer so passionate, so sensual, so perversely sardonic as Donne, whose love poems were the foam upon the sea of a tempestuous and voluptuous youth, and whose sacred pieces even, written in those years which succeeded his conversion, are instinct with a sort of rebellious hysteria, strangely fascinating and persuasive.

This violence of the animal frenzy, embroidered in flame over the dark texture of a scholastic, almost a mediæval, temperament, give to the poems of Donne a fascination which is particularly potent among youthful readers. It is probable that no other Elizabethan lyrical writer is so intimately valued and so profoundly, perhaps so secretly, studied by the generation now engaged in recording its emotional experiences as the author of "Busy old fool, unruly Sun" and "The First Anniversary." The misconceptions of the old school of critics, who mixed up such incongruous figures as Carew and Cowley with Donne in the sterility of a so-called and wholly supposititious "Metaphysical School," are ludicrous in the eyes of modern readers who feel the pulse of passion bounding, like a wave, under the stormy surface of Donne's poetry.

But while the verse of Donne has now become assured of a foremost place in all intelligent study of our literature, his prose has hitherto suffered from an almost complete indifference. Yet he wrote very abundantly in prose, and his letters, sermons, essays, and controversial satires are enough to fit out a bookcase. The reason of this neglect is not difficult to discover. What Mr. Pearsall Smith says of the *Sermons* may be repeated of all the prose work—"it is not only the mere bulk and body of

these folios which daunt the reader; there is much in the writing itself which renders it difficult and distasteful to the modern mind." He speaks here of the *Sermons*, where he admits that Donne's faults were "carried by him to a pitch which gives him a bad eminence over the most unreadable" of the seventeenth-century divines.

It is almost a personal gratification to me to read these words from the latest and wisest of the students of Donne's prose, for I myself, when, more than twenty years ago, I set forth on the unplumbed ocean of editing Donne's correspondence, was often on the point of breaking down, not merely under the pressure of the obscure mass, but under the intense irritation caused by some features of Donne's character. Often, for pages after pages, the form is so tortured, the sentiment so remote, the emotion so pitiless and inquisitorial, that human nature, in its lax modern moods, seems unable to support the strain of all this crabbed and obsolete invective.

The world, therefore, is to be excused if, while clasping Donne to its heart as a poet, it has been content to take him for granted as a prose-writer. He wrote most detestable prose in an age which had not yet strained the language of common life through the jelly-bag. All the torrent which poured from his lips as he stood, a monument of awful death in life, in his pulpit in the old Gothic cathedral of St. Paul's was turbid with the refuse of scholastic Latin, and stained with the experiments of an English still unrefined. After all, when people like Taine speak of the great English divines as a sort of ichthyosaurians wallowing in the slime of their own obscure diction, we may recall that the mundane and playful writers of that age, like Dekker and Rowlands, are not more limpid nor much easier to read than the theologians. The fact is that, with a few bright exceptions, prose did not exist in any real lucidity and grace until the middle of the

century, and English style had no Calvin to clarify its cloudiness till Jeremy Taylor rose in all his splendour. Donne is perhaps worse than the rest in certain qualities and relations, but he is better than almost all at certain moments of inspiration and glory.

Readers who have never had, and doubtless never would have, the patience to discover these glorious and inspired moments for themselves, are therefore under a strong obligation to Mr. Pearsall Smith for preparing the anthology before us. Out of the howling wilderness of Donne's *Sermons* he has created an artificial paradise for us by extracting all the oases, and arranging them side by side. Let no one imagine that this was an easy task. Only a traveller who has crossed the desert knows what a weariness it must have been to toil through so many inexorable folios and so many thorny and crackling quartos. The eye becomes dim, the ear becomes dulled, in the act of marching across such wastes of didactic meditation. The unbending asperity, the sepulchral tone, deafen and bewilder the brain in its search. We lie buried under sandstorms where we hoped to find fountains of living water, and what we took for clusters of palm-trees turn out to be no better than mirage. Yet there are wells of an enchanting freshness, and there are soft lawns studded with blossoms, and no one could be a safer guide to their beauty than is the patient and accomplished author of *Trivia*.

Donne's sermons occupied an hour each to deliver. Sometimes, when he had been interrupted by long-drawn murmurs of applause, he would doubtless exceed the hour. He preached his first published sermon in 1616; it was delivered in the presence of James I., and reads like an attack on the moral character of that monarch. But this, no doubt, was accidental, founded, as Donne's very unpleasing flatteries of Rochester must have been, on a total ignorance of scandals known to us to-day. After this, for

five years, Donne preached fifty sermons a year, and a great many after that until his death.

What a mass of predication, and how thankful we ought to be that only a fragment of it has been preserved! At his best—especially, I think, in the sermons "Let Me Wither" and "Death's Duel"—these portentous performances, delivered with phantasmal majesty and in a voice the magic of which every witness agrees in proclaiming, may still produce an echo of their original splendour, but we shall all do well for the future, I think, to let the folios and the quartos sleep behind the glass doors of our libraries, and satisfy ourselves with the quintessence so exquisitely distilled for us by the skill of Mr. Pearsall Smith.

WINE AND MR. SAINTSBURY

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Leigh Hunt, who never possessed a cellar, but who would, had time permitted, have much appreciated dining with Mr. Saintsbury, conceived the appointment of an official "Jury of Tasters," who should be a board of elderly gentlemen "with the most thoughtful faces." He imagined them sitting in high appeal, profoundly ruminating on the pretensions of such a soufflé or such a vintage. Since his day the subject has received insufficient attention. Did the Grilled Red Mullet go with the Château Yqueam of 1870, or would a White Hermitage of 1865 have supplied a finer harmony? This is the sort of question which such a board would have to decide, and of its importance no thinking man of any sensibility can entertain a doubt. There would have to be a chairman, and his election would be a matter of much serious discussion. In these days the round man is too often pushed into the square hole, but if justice and reason were combined in the choice, Mr. Saintsbury could not fail to be selected. If there be any person ignorant of the fact that he is the prince of living gourmets, his *Notes on a Cellar-Book* would be sufficient to silence the infidel. He had long enjoyed his œnological doctorate, and here at last is his thesis.

In these days, when an implacable intolerance has subdued one continent and threatened another, it requires some courage to defend the qualities and benefits of wine, not merely with no shadow of apology, but with the zeal of an apostle. Probably the gravest error in tactics which

the advocates of a moderate use of alcohol have committed is that they have adopted an apologetic air. They have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the enemy, and have retired, instead of pushing the war into his country. The Pusillanimity of the Moderate Drinker would be a capital subject for an essay in a competitive examination. The creature really is too chicken-hearted. He allows the teetotal lecturer to assert that a single glass of light claret destroys the body and soul of man as devastatingly as an orgy on Siamese gin—a beverage which I once tasted and never shall forget. He is ashamed of what he should be proud of, namely, his liberty to gratify his own innocent tastes with no other guide but discretion and common sense.

Mr. Saintsbury will have none of such poltroonery. He tramples on the pride of Diogenes with a greater pride than his. He says, firmly, that "there is absolutely no scientific proof, of a trustworthy kind, that moderate consumption of sound alcoholic liquor does a healthy body any harm at all; while, on the other hand, there is the unbroken testimony of all history that alcoholic liquors have been used by the strongest, wisest, handsomest, and in every way best races of all times." His cheery book is written in this spirit throughout, and is remarkable for nothing more than for its magnificent refusal to be brow-beaten by any Pussyfoot, whether American or native.

The language of gusto and rapture which Mr. Saintsbury employs, often quite lyrically, in his rich commendation of wine, may sometimes seem to be excessive, but a little exaggeration may surely be permitted to counterbalance the audacities of the professional prohibitionist. Perhaps the truth lies midway, as it often does. A very grave physician of authority, Dr. Thudichum, remarked in his *Cantor Lectures*, nearly half a century ago, that pure wine

"rouses the higher faculties of thought, memory and imagination, and increases the zest of life and its duration." Dr. Thudichum had met with a person who had undermined his health by an indiscriminate use of sherry, but we may advance that there is a great deal which was then and is still called *vino de pasto* which burns the inside far more than it comforts it. The learned doctor was quite aware of this, and warned his patients to be careful to drink nothing but "sound" wine, and that moderately, with due regard to individual habits and conditions. He wrote, however, entirely in the interests of truth, at a time when political passion and international intrigue had not burst open our cellars and emptied their contents. Wine is essentially the solace of early maturity; as we advance in life, neither the palate nor the stomach can any longer be trusted, and it is possible that the decline in the popularity of wine is a symbol that the round earth is sinking into senility.

In his earliest chapters, Mr. Saintsbury is, perhaps, a little too closely bound to his cellar-book. He becomes more amusing when he feels free to diverge into general considerations. With the strongest exercise of the imagination, it is difficult to share the raptures which a catalogue of ports still gives to a man who was fortunate enough to drink them thirty years ago We read of "a curious Dow" which was completely tawny in character, of the wonderfully rapid development of "the '04s," and (with regret) of a delicate Ventozello of '72, which began to be "slightly senescent" after 1902. We learn that Mr. Saintsbury, in bygone years, found "more than mere satisfaction in two outsiders—Gentiles, as it were, or at least trans-Jordanians to the pure Israel of Medoc—to wit, Pape Clément and Haut Brion Larrivet." We receive these utterances with respect, but we wish that Mr. Saintsbury could restore something of the ecstasy:—

> " Could I revive within me
> The symphony and song,
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me
> That with music loud and long "

I would ride out *cap-à-pie* to shiver a lance with the teetotallers. But alas! fancy cannot build so well as to explain why, towards the close of last century, Mr. Saintsbury derived less enjoyment from a Richebourg of '69 than he did from a Romanée Conti of '58. We can restore this distinction no more vividly than we can recapture the smack on the palate with which the Emperor Commodus must have read the list of the world's best wines which was drafted for him by the grammarian Pollux.

The wines of the ancients must have been very disagreeable. Pussyfoot is welcome to the famous Falernian, which had the honey of Mount Hymettus mingled with it, and to those famous Sicilian vintages into which were grated aloes and tar, dried figs and myrrh. " Fill high the bowl with Samian wine " for Byron, if he likes, but not for me. I have no confidence in myrrh as an addition to a fruity port. However, Mr. Saintsbury does not touch on the antiquity of wines, nor on the heresy of the Spartans, who practised a prohibition of their own as a class-distinction, their slaves being urged to drink as a symbol of the contempt in which they were held, while the masters strictly confined themselves to soda-water or its archaic equivalent.

The Romans concocted a wine of turnips, which was sovereign against the fatigues of war. This might, with no small advantage, be introduced to-day for general use in Central Europe. I doubt whether it competed favourably with the rich libations of a Rhodian vintage, but these idle divagations are taking me too far from Mr. Saintsbury's cellar, which in its time has held treasures

more pleasing than were known to the most luxurious of the ignorant heathen.

We have long been buoyed up with the hope that Mr. Saintsbury would write a History of Wine. He admits that he actually began such a work, and his reasons for abandoning it, which everybody must regret, are characteristic. He says :—

"There would have been a considerable literature to look up; and while I was not favourably situated in respect of access to it, my original farewell had been no trick, but the result of a genuine sense that I was getting too old for such a work. It would need infinite research to satisfy my own ideas of thoroughness; for I have never yet given a second-hand opinion of any thing, or book, or person. Also, I should have had to drink more good wine than would now be good for my pocket, or perhaps even my health, and more bad than I could contemplate without dismay in my advancing years."

The last consideration, indeed, is one which will call forth a response from every delicate bosom, for it is a horrible thought that Mr. Saintsbury, who has taken so much pains throughout his honoured life to drink none but the finest liquor, might have filled his closing years with bitterness by imbibing quantities of bad wine in the service of historical thoroughness.

No one must miss Mr. Saintsbury's chapter on "Liqueurs," which is extremely diverting. Zola wrote a short story, called (I think) *La Fête à Coqueville*, describing how a ship laden with bénédictine and curaçao ran ashore on the rocks of a Norman fishing village, and how uproariously its cargo was appreciated by the inhabitants. When the bacchanal was over, the silly fisher-folk lay about upon the sands, and were sorry for themselves.

Mr. Saintsbury, so indulgent to real wines, is rather harsh to liqueurs; he thinks several of them "a trifle sickly." But he remembers with thankfulness a curaçao which he procured, between forty and fifty years ago, "at the well-known house of Justerini and Brooks in the vanished Opera Colonnade." Alas! for the trappestines of yester-year and the chartreuses that are no more! How old and sad we are growing! Yet Mr. Saintsbury still finds something attractive in "the straw envelope of a mara-schino bottle." O joy that in our embers is *something* that doth live! An anecdote of how the late Bishop of London, Creighton, was believed to have poisoned the landlord of his Oxford lodgings with a glass of absinthe, is very pleasing.

On beverages, which intrude rather importunately upon a disquisition on wines, Mr. Saintsbury is lively, but not so serious as might be wished. He speaks with levity of cider, a national drink of great merit, and of perry with something like contempt. What Cowley calls "the gentler apple's winy juice" is, he declares, "not to be drunk without caution, and sometimes has to be given up alto-gether from medical aspects." This stigma on cider sur-prises me from one who has drunk 1780 Madeira without the smallest inconvenience.

SOME FRENCH MEMOIRS

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French memoirs are the most amusing in the world, and the unpublished stores of them seem to be inexhaustible. M. Émile Magne holds the key to those which illustrate the reign of Louis XIV., and he has published over a dozen volumes which are full of historical and literary value. He has painted Scarron and the Abbé de Boisrobert and Ninon de Lanclos as they were never painted before, and we open a new publication of his with the certainty of being infinitely entertained. He now occupies himself (*Lettres inédites à Marie-Louise, reine de Pologne :* Émile-Paul : 7 fr. 50) with one of the most curious figures of European history, the Queen who very nearly succeeded in making Poland a great and durable power in the world. Her story is the most romantic and extraordinary possible, and nothing is more thrilling than the record of her adventures. The all-important part which she took in the politics of her adopted country does not seem to have been hitherto recognised. For instance, in the very full account of Polish history in the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, I do not find the name of Marie-Louise once mentioned. The attention of the world is now concentrated on the resuscitation of Poland, and M. Magne has chosen well the moment for dwelling on the ambition of the audacious consort of two vacillating Polish monarchs.

Marie de Gonzague was born at Nevers in 1611. She was the third daughter of Charles de Nevers, who became, in 1631, after years of struggle, the reigning Duke of

Mantua. He seems to have instilled into Marie from a tender age the ambition to become a queen, than which few things seemed then to be less probable. She never ceased to sigh for a crown. Her early adventures were unlucky. She persuaded Gaston of Orleans, the brother and probable heir of Louis XIII., to propose marriage to her, but Marie de Médicis would not hear of such a mésalliance. Monsieur sighed as a lover, but obeyed as a son. Marie de Gonzague then turned her attention to the throne of Poland, and nearly married Wladislas IV., but again she was disappointed. She was made governor of the province of Nivernais as a consolation.

She next cast "the glad eye" on an Italian nobleman, and then on the Marquis de Gesvres, who committed suicide. Marie de Gonzague, much disgusted, became, for a short time, an ardent Jansenist. That fervour wearing off, she opened a fashionable salon in Paris. Now the daughter of a sovereign prince, she was eligible for a throne, but no one seemed to think of her. However, when she was still only thirty-four, but grown very fat, King Wladislas IV., whose wife was dead, swam again into her ken, and this time she caught him. She left for Warsaw in 1645, a queen at last, in circumstances of such incomparable pomp and splendour that she must have been consoled for all her early disappointments. In order to enter Poland, where no one was allowed to bear the simple name of the Queen of Heaven, she had to change hers to Marie-Louise.

Once arrived in Poland, she began a new existence. Mazarin had sent her to Warsaw to support the cause of France against Austria, but after some tergiversations, the Queen declared herself neither for one nor for the other. She became a stout and fervent supporter of national Polish independence, and more of a Pole than the Poles themselves. Her feeble spouse, a very amiable man, whom

she managed with adroitness, died in 1648. Marie-Louise immediately contrived the election of his brother to the throne, and married him herself as soon as he became King John Casimir V. For nineteen more troublous years she administered the realm, and preserved her courage in spite of the death of a daughter and then a son, in whom she had dreamed to found a dynasty. Those were terrible times, when Poland became nothing but a cemetery in a vast ruin.

Queen Marie-Louise died in 1667, just at the moment when, after incredible efforts and sacrifices, she seemed to be on the point of renovating the beloved country of her adoption. Her death was, as M. Magne says, an incalculable disaster for Poland. The Letters which M. Magne prints are not the Queen's, for these seem to be lost, but those written to her between 1664 and 1667 by the Prince de Condé and the Duc d'Enghien, giving her in minute detail the French Court gossip of the day. Here, for instance (on September 18, 1665), is a long account of a new play, " qu'un comédien que l'on appelle Molière a faite ; c'est un homme qui a autant d'esprit que l'on peut avoir." The Duc gives an analysis of the plot, which is that of *L'Amour Médecin*, then recently played at Versailles. These interesting and important letters are now for the first time printed from the originals in the archives at Chantilly.

We descend a little in the social scale when we reach Sidonia de Lenoncourt, whose adventures have inspired M. André Beaunier to write a book (*Sidonia ou le malheur d'être jolie :* Calmann-Lévy : 4 fr. 90) which is as amusing as an audacious novel. The heroine is the notorious Marquise de Courcelles, who appears again and again in the scandalous chronicles of the seventeenth century. Her Memoirs have been edited several times, but always with

so many omissions and mistakes that M. Beaunier is justified in claiming that his volume supersedes all previous publications. Sidonia's correspondence and the papers dealing with her deplorable law-suits and trials have all been preserved, in the wonderful French way, in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Sainte-Beuve held up Sidonia de Courcelles as the exact opposite of the virtuous Mme. de Sevigné in morals, and certainly her conduct was far from praiseworthy. But she was so young—after adventures which might have occupied a century, she died at thirty-five—and circumstances were so cruelly and uniformly against her, that, sinner as she was, we must forgive her. Moreover, she was an amusing and skilful letter-writer, and as adroit as an eel in wriggling out of one false position after another.

The volume M. Beaunier has so cleverly put together throws an amazing light on the social life of France at the end of the reign of Louis XIV., with its rapacious hypocrisies, its bursts of gaiety, its absence of any real security for purse or person, and its almost extravagant intellectual refinement. You might be dancing with princes at Versailles overnight, and find yourself locked up in prison in Paris next morning. It is true that with the exercise of some slyness, and a little gold, you might soon find yourself again at liberty. Sidonia de Courcelles endured as many of these ups and downs as the heroine of a Dumas romance.

Our ingenious friend "Solomon Eagle" remarked the other day, to my great surprise, that the renown of the late Jules Lemaître had not contrived to cross the Channel. All depends on what we call "crossing." If to be famous a man must be as widely known as Miss Mary Pickford, no doubt Lemaître was obscure, and so would be any foreigner in the intellectual order of things. If we once

begin to contrast the readers of a good book with the spectators of a great match at the Oval, we lose all sense of proportion. But I should certainly affirm that no man has occupied himself seriously and eagerly with literature during the last thirty years who has not paid his private tribute of sympathy to the author of *Les Contemporains*. The method of critical approach, which Lemaître's enemies called "impressionist," has (for good or evil) spread to every department of letters, and I venture to affirm that the idlest reviewer to-day who sports with a serious book in a couple of sentences, is unconsciously affected by a misconception of the art of Lemaître. No doubt the author of *Serenus* was a child of his time; he belonged to the last years of Renan, to the generation of the Parnassians, to the revival of patriotic idealism. Already, especially since the war, he may begin to seem old-fashioned. But his books, which had an immense sale, continue to be the embodiment, and the most complete and delicate commentary on the literature of France between 1880 and 1910. Whatever is forgotten, Lemaître will always be referred to, always be in evidence.

Of this typical man of his age, M. Henri Bordeaux has written a memoir which is a model of discretion and grace. Jules Lemaître had no adventures outside his study and his lecture-room, and his biographer has not attempted to be emphatic. M. Bordeaux is one of the latest elected Immortals of the French Academy, and it was his duty to pronounce a eulogy on his predecessor, who happened to be Lemaître. His study extended beyond the limit of a discourse, and had to be cut down to suit the occasion, but M. Bordeaux has preserved the original form of his monograph, and now gives it to the public (*Jules Lemaître:* Paris, Plon: 7 frs.). He traces with sympathy and skill the evolution of the mind of the great critic, the development of his powers of analysis,

and the depth of the humanity which so eminently preserved him from the dryness and dogmatism of the school of Brunetière, which he superseded. Lemaître was a little peasant of the Beauce, born in 1853 in the hamlet of Tavers, where he died in August 1914, the very earliest victim of the Great War, since it was on reading the notice of the call to arms that he was seized by the fit which was fatal a few hours later. His early history is that of the ordinary scholastic youth, trained in the noble parsimony of a French country home, and destined to be a schoolmaster and, if possible, a professor. We follow Lemaître through the difficulties of his early days to his final success, which, universal as it was, left him always laborious, simple, and a son of the beautiful soil of France.

Jules Lemaître, acclaimed by packed crowds of students at the Société des Conférences, and lecturing—his lectures were the most exquisite ever listened to—on Racine or Mme. Récamier, was a familiar personage. But few knew the melancholy and prematurely aged man in the retirement of his ancestral farmhouse at Tavers, a solitary and pensive figure strolling under his poplar-trees by the banks of the little river Lien. This is the Lemaître to whom M. Henri Bordeaux introduces us with all the freshness and simplicity which we expect from the author of *Les Roquevillard*. Not many readers of his clean and wholesome novels recollect that the earliest publication of M. Bordeaux was a volume of critical essays, the *Ames Modernes* of 1894. He touched lightly on Lemaître there, but much water has flowed under the Pont Neuf since then.

WINNER AND WASTER

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THE one alliterative poem of the fourteenth century which everybody knows is *The Vision of Piers the Plowman*, written about the year 1362. This is the familiar type, but it belonged to a class which flourished abundantly for a brief period. We are accustomed to think of *Piers Plowman* as archaic, but, in fact, it was archaistic. It and the numerous other unrhymed poems which are associated with it were consciously modelled on the old Anglo-Saxon verse which had long been superseded.

William Langland was to Chaucer and Gower as the Pre-Raphaelites were to their contemporaries in the Royal Academy; he went back ostentatiously to what he considered a purer and more national style. If Chaucer had not been a great genius drenched in "poisonous honey brought from France" and from Italy, the return of alliteration to English verse might have been permanent, and no one can conjecture what would have been the result. As it happened, though the revived prosody attracted, besides Langland, several writers of talent, it was unable to resist the force of the Latin genius. By the year 1400, rhyme had reasserted itself, and the reaction was over.

Sir Israel Gollancz, who nearly thirty years ago introduced to us the anonymous *Pearl*, a very beautiful example of the alliterative revival, and whose zeal in the examination of early English verse is untiring, has now edited a poem (*A Good Short Debate between Winner and Waster*) of which but one, and that an imperfect, manuscript

survives. Nobody knows who wrote *Winner and Waster*, but he was a "western wight," a professional minstrel, and of humble rank. A picturesque suggestion to account for the extremely corrupt state of the manuscript is made by Sir Israel Gollancz when he supposes it to have been copied, ignorantly, from the original which was carried about in the minstrel's wallet until in several places it had become illegible. Not much, after all, seems to have been lost, and the patient ingenuity of the modern editor has restored the text wherever it was obviously faulty.

What gives *Winner and Waster* peculiar importance is that internal evidence points irresistibly to its having been composed in 1352, that is to say, ten years before William Langland began to write down his great vision. This leads Sir Israel Gollancz to say with confidence that *Winner and Waster* inspired the prophet-poet of the Malvern Hills. If this is certainly the case, it was a splendid thing to do, and would alone make the earlier poem notable, but *Winner and Waster* has independent claims on our attention.

The poem is called a "debate," and this was a term much used in mediæval literature for a dialogue as well as for a dispute. One of the recognised conventions was the give and take of a "debate," out of which, no doubt, the form of the drama ultimately sprang, through the mystery and miracle plays of the following century. In the poem before us the "debate," which it must be allowed is not very dramatic, is held between the representatives of trade and expenditure. It is amusing to know that six hundred years ago there existed as recognised national inconveniences the very classes which we deplore to-day. The Plantagenets suffered from profiteers and *nouveaux riches*, and from the violence of the contrast between poverty and wealth. Moreover, those who had made money were exasperated with those who lavished it, and

there arose the same outcry about economy that echoes through debates in Parliament to-day.

As in 1921, it is the wastefulness of the Government which is attacked, so in 1352 it was the extravagance of the King which was deplored, but more timidly, since to call down the wrath of an all-powerful monarch was a much more serious matter than it is to annoy a department in a Whitehall office. The King was the magnificent Edward III., who was so cunning an encourager of merchants that he might well stand for Winner, while in his reckless extravagance he was no less the very type of Waster. The poet, with a good deal of tact, submits the problem to the judgment of the King himself, who, near the close of the poem, characteristically votes for both sides of the argument, and declares "the more thou wasteth thy wealth, the more Winner thee loveth." In the preceding year, 1351, Edward III. had terribly fluttered the English merchants by definitely accepting the policy of Free Trade with France.

Like most poems of that age, *Winner and Waster* takes the form of a vision seen in a dream. It seems as though the idea of a direct invention was too alarming for a fourteenth-century mind to face, and that therefore the narrative or the picture must always be something revealed in sleep. In a dream anything may happen, and the minstrel could not be accused of telling a lie if he said that he had encountered a vision, however startling. *The Romaunt of the Rose* opens with an apology for the practice, and attributes it to the example of Macrobius, an old Roman grammarian who wrote a *Dream of Scipio*, which had an extraordinary vogue in the Middle Ages. But all the mediæval poets adopted it.

Chaucer cannot write *The Book of the Duchess* without beginning by telling us that as he slept on a May morning in his bed he dreamed that a great company of little birds

came to accompany him to the Emperor Octavian's hunting. And Piers Plowman can only reach his views about religion, politics, and charity by feigning to fall asleep on Malvern Hills, and have a vision of a communicative fairy. The convention was universal, and I can only account for it by the supposition that, as I say, it guarded the minstrel from the charge of telling lies, by hiding him behind the protective veil of sleep, which removes all responsibility. As a matter of course, therefore, the author of *Winner and Waster*, as he went "wandering alone in the west"—perhaps in Devonshire—lay down in a wood beside a stream, and listened to the birds, until he fell into a deep sleep and dreamed what follows.

He dreamed that he stood somewhere in the world, he knew not where, and saw a lovely lawn a mile wide, enclosed in mountains, on the opposite slopes of which were gathered two armies, facing one another. They wore bright helmets, and their flags were flying; as the poet gazed they fell into squadrons, and appeared to be on the point of rushing across the lawn to meet in battle onset. The poet—a man of peace—shouted to them to stay till the Prince arrived, who was worthier in wit than any wight else. We had not yet heard of this prince, who may be Edward III., or may be his son. Suddenly, on the crest of a cliff hard by, the poet sees a "cabin" or pavilion of great magnificence. It is painted, roof and sides, with vermilion, embossed with English besants of gold, and girdled with Indian garters worked in gold on a pale blue ground.

The actual phrase is "painted in plunket"—which meant light blue in 1352. "Plunket" is one of the many distinct and valuable words which we have allowed to drop out of the language. The motto on the girdles was "Hethyng have the hathell that any harme thynkes," in which it requires no great skill to recognise "Honi soit

qui mal y pense." Inside the tent, or "cabin," there sits a stately figure, the King, wearing a berry-brown beard (Edward III. was just forty), and clothed in heraldic splendour, no doubt very much like the King of the Magians in Benozzo Gozzoli's great picture in the Palazzo Riccardi, "a comely king, crowned with gold, on silken bench seated, with sceptre in hand."

At King Edward's side, and overshadowed, like him, by the terrible golden leopards of state, stands a "baron," or liege warrior, in whom the King has more trust than in any one else. This is undoubtedly the Black Prince, who, young as he still was, had achieved wonders in chivalry and was at Créçy. The King sends down this royal herald to the two armies, bidding them to desist from fighting and to come to a mutual understanding. They are to drop their arms and to state their case before the King, who will decide on its merits. Two leaders accordingly step forth, and are conducted by the Prince up to the King's pavilion; they are Winner and Waster, and they set out, in language plain and direct enough after the opulence of the setting, what were the main problems of existence in England in 1352.

There was plenty of money in the country, but the complaint then, as ever, was that wealth was not evenly distributed. There were "new rich" who had grown fabulously prosperous by trading with France after 1349; and there were those who were pinched by competition with these merchants, who belonged to an older class, and who suffered from the twofold disadvantage of not being able to win and not being able to desist from spending. As we have seen, Edward III. was appropriately summoned to adjudicate in this delicate debate, since he was himself both winner and waster, and might be supposed to appreciate to a nicety the difficulties of the economical balance.

Such, in great brevity, is the theme of the earliest English poem of the alliterative revival which is known to exist. It is worthy of careful study, for it is in a high degree amusing, and so picturesque that in certain passages it seems to blaze with heraldic colour. Those who are able to judge best attribute to the same author another "debate," or vision, called *The Parliament of the Three Ages*, which occurs in the same manuscript, and was published by Sir Israel Gollancz in 1915. In the present edition he has done everything possible to facilitate our pleasure in reading what without his help would be impenetrably obscure to most of us, and his explanatory notes are delightful.

THE TUTOR OF MARCUS AURELIUS

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How persons who are professionally engaged in the cramming of the young may regard the volumes of the Loeb Library, I do not know. I suspect that Dr. Blimber was very far from being the last of those who are convinced that "all the fancies of the poets and the lessons of the sages are a mere collection of words and grammar, and have no other meaning in the world." I fear that to many of his class the writers of antiquity are still nothing better than so many nuts the cracking of which is their only attraction, and the contents, whether juicy or dusty, of not the slightest consequence. But the charm of the Loeb Library is that it releases the grown-up reader from the scholastic bondage, from being dragged in the wake of "stony-hearted verbs" and "savage noun-substantives," and permits him to add the classic author to the group of books he reads for pleasure.

It does this, not with the bare vulgarity of a "crib," but by printing the Latin on one side and the English on the other, so that those who still possess something, although perhaps no longer very much, of what they learned at school, may read again, and this time with apprehension and gusto. A friend of mine, who was a fair scholar in his youth, before the things of this world pushed in, told me the other day that he was greatly enjoying himself in reading the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid in the Loeb edition. "What a gift of narrative," he said; "I read the Latin,

and then, if I meet with the slightest difficulty, I glance aside at the translation, and, without losing any time, I come back to the Latin." That is the way to enjoy a classic writer, and to defy the schoolmaster.

Fronto is an author whom we have never been allowed to read, because he came not merely after the great Augustans, but even when the Silver Age was over. The pedagogic tradition that nothing is worth reading that was written after the fall of Domitian has been carefully supported, and is, of course, difficult to refute. But the elaborate and erudite society of Rome continued to exist and even to develop, and we are surely permitted to indulge a curiosity as to its literary expression.

I think it quite possible that a future world of critics may look upon English literature under Queen Victoria much as learned scholars look upon Latin literature under Antoninus Pius—that is to say, as something of trifling moment, archaistic and pretentious, and not worthy of serious attention. It may be so, since the changes of taste in intellectual matter are imponderable. We do not easily realise how long a period was covered by the active literature of Rome. To Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, Cicero was as remote as Addison is to us; Horace and Virgil were as Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson; while Ennius, to whose poetry they harked back as to a storehouse of rich words, was as far behind them as Spenser is behind us.

To read what Mr. Haines says, in his admirable introduction, about Fronto's *elocutio novella* is to be reminded of William Morris in his prose romances, or, still more, of Mr. Doughty in his *Arabia Deserta*. It suggests, what can never fail to be interesting, that the mental temper of the second century in Rome was in some points curiously like that of the twentieth century in London.

Fronto was born in Africa, probably in the year 100. He calls himself, as a joke, "a Libyan of the wandering

Libyans," but he was doubtless of pure Roman lineage. He was educated, no doubt, in Alexandria, but he disliked the Greek language and the Egyptian philosophy. He was a rich man, a patrician, and soon after his arrival in Rome, a senator. He took up the study of Latin literature and oratory at a mature age, and became absorbed in it for the rest of his life. With tantalising vagueness we perceive him rising to the highest eminence as an orator and as a writer, and recognised as " not the second but the alternative glory of Roman eloquence." That is to say, as equal to the already immortal Cicero.

By what arts did he advance to such pre-eminence in a highly critical and sensitive society? We might as well ask what songs the Sirens sang, and it is hopeless to try to penetrate the bright mist in which the youthful Fronto moves. At length, in 138, it divides, and we see several facts. Hadrian dies; Antoninus Pius comes to the throne, and immediately appoints Fronto tutor to his adopted sons, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Instantly the closest intellectual and moral intimacy is evident between the orator and the future emperor, an intimacy not broken for nearly thirty years, and then only by the death of Fronto.

What we possess of the lifelong literary labours of Fronto is almost exclusively a portion of the letters which he exchanged with his imperial pupil. To judge of his value by them is almost as unfair as it would be to judge of Milton by the letters he wrote as Secretary to the Council of State.

The tone of the correspondence is strange, and has disconcerted most of those moderns who have approached the subject. The famous oratorical senator of thirty-eight years and the future emperor of seventeen address one another in terms of extreme intimacy and affection, especially at first. Without agreeing with one of the best of critics, who accuses Marcus Aurelius and Fronto of " writing to each other with the effusiveness of two schoolgirls," it

must be admitted that there is an extraordinary iteration of "Fronto merito carissime" and "mi magister dulcissime," by the imperial pupil. Marcus calls Fronto his "greatest treasure beneath the sky, my glory," and Fronto replies that "I love the gods who watch over you, I love life for your sake." The weight of such expressions depends on the convention of the age in which they are uttered; they are more than equalled by the terms in which the elderly Hubert Languet and the juvenile Sir Philip Sidney addressed each other, and there is a beauty in what Fulke Greville calls the "harmony of a humble hearer to an excellent teacher" which encourages in generous and ardent souls an effusiveness that is not flattery.

As to the terms of affection, pure and simple, they also are conventional, and we may overhear even to-day, when language has become so reserved and discreet, expressions used between the members of certain religious bodies which sound like passion and are scarcely more than courtesy. Moreover, it seems to me that a proud, wealthy and celebrated man in Fronto's position would refuse to accept the post of tutor to the Emperor's adopted son save on terms of moral equality, and that Fronto might even accentuate a little his personal affection for Marcus Aurelius, which was obviously genuine, in order to make that equality more emphatic.

Fronto's earliest preserved letter is a kind of essay on the art of composition, a sort of elegant and discursive lecture, used, I suppose, as a basis for conversation and discussion when the tutor and the pupil met. We easily see that to Fronto literature, and principally exactitude in expression, were of primary importance. We see also that from the first, though so affectionately and admiringly docile, Marcus Aurelius was not mainly attracted by style, but by other and broader considerations. The duties of a Roman Emperor included a large measure of oratory; it

was needful that he should be trained in easy, public expression of a wide variety of themes, and that he should learn to give the exact values of things in precise language.

But from the first Fronto was vexed to find in his imperial pupil a lack of sympathy with words. Marcus Aurelius was disposed in hurried speech to take not the very best possible, but the first phrase which came to hand. When Fronto expends his elegant ingenuity on an essay tending to show Marcus what delicate differences there exist between apparent synonyms for the word "washing," the pupil is inattentive, and is discovered not to have observed the corrections. But Fronto does not tire, and he assures Marcus that literary immortality is only won by graving language "with burin and mallet, as though words were little gems." But Marcus did not thirst after literary immortality, and presently there came a crisis. When he was five-and-twenty Marcus Aurelius announced to Fronto, who was nearly heartbroken, that he was going to discard rhetoric for philosophy. This becomes more intelligible to us if we say that he abandoned the cultivation of literary style in favour of reflective thought.

After the first spasm of disappointment, Fronto accepted the situation, and though the correspondence proceeds on a footing of no less affectionate intimacy than before, it deals with personal matters, with Fronto's being scorched at the bath by the carelessness of his slaves, with the touching attentions of Lucius Verus, who tenderly supported his rheumatic limbs, with the plans of the architects who were enlarging his sumptuous villa on the Esqueline, with the vines of his famous garden which had once belonged to Mecœnas. And, after a while, Fronto comes back to his inveterate obsession, the passion for style, for the arrangement of jewelled words.

Slight are these touches, and evanescent. They leave us still in the dark as to Fronto's real attitude to letters,

his actual relations with the active and busy intellectual life of the age of which he was the principal ornament. He seems to be pre-eminent for good sense. His infatuation for Marcus Aurelius does not blind him to common things; gently he blames certain tricks in his pupil, such as wearing too serious a face in public, and ostentatiously reading books, in a distraction likely to render him unpopular, at dinner or at the theatre. His references to his own wife and daughters are homely and affectionate. We dimly conceive him enthroned in the pomp of public lectures in the Temple of Peace, carried thither in raiment of purple and white, since he eschewed both flame-colour and saffron-yellow. But what did he say to his adoring audience when he spoke? We are told that he excelled in splendour and gravity, but on what subjects and in what terms? Pater has endeavoured in a sumptuous passage of *Marius the Epicurean* to make the tulip of his oratory blossom from the dust, but with what success, who knows?

Mr. Haines, with infinite labour and learning, helps to throw on our darkness what light he can. He supposes that Fronto adorned himself, and delighted his hearers, with a wealth of imagery. We may be sure that he was intensely sophisticated. Marcus Aurelius, with all the literature of Rome before him, declared that he had never read anything so refined, so classical, so polished, so Latin as Fronto's essays.

"So Latin"—that is perhaps the key to the enigma! Mr. Haines dwells upon the simplicity and the archaism, the resistance to the flood of Greek floridity, the return to the older, the pre-Ciceronian types, the rejection of terms minted in the Silver Age, the emphasis on the immense richness of the old Latin language, still retained in colloquial speech and to be restored to literature. But how little we know, how little we see of a vague and beautiful figure faintly drawn against the background of an exquisite civilisation that has passed away for ever!

A STORMY PETREL

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A COMPLETE and lamentable insensibility to the art of music leaves me incompetent to touch on the professional side of the autobiography of a very distinguished musician. But *Impressions that Remained* is miles away from the ordinary record of triumphs in the concert-room. It is the vigorous and unvarnished portrait by herself of a woman who admits, not without a certain complacency, that she has always been "the stormy petrel" of any society into which she has been thrown. The book is what the cant of to-day calls "a human document"; it is naïve and candid almost to excess. The author, although on the whole, and not unjustifiably, very well pleased with her own character and her own achievements, describes them without fatuity, and is frankly prepared to admit here an error, and there a deficiency. An autobiography must, in the nature of things, be an apology. The author, sensitive to the reader's censure, hastens to admit her faults lest she should seem to palliate them, and the art of self-revelation consists in knowing how much to unveil without hazarding the sympathy of those whose disapproval has to be tempered by amusement or intelligence. When Miss Ethel Smyth tells us of the stones she dropped from the bridge on a passing train, or of her exposure of her governess's false chignon, she knows that we shall like her none the worse for having been so refractory.

The two volumes occupy, if I may conjecture so much without indiscretion, a little less than thirty-five years. They close, abruptly, at a point twenty-eight years ago.

The subject, fragmentary in its conception, is further divided into two parts, which have little interrelation. A particularly frank and "breezy" description of the author's English family during her childhood and early youth brings us down to 1877, when she rides roughshod over the reluctance of her parents, and goes off to study music in Germany. We then contemplate her musical, but still more minutely her emotional and ethical adventures down to the year 1891. The later portion of the book is somewhat obscured by the observation of a sound but inconvenient law, namely, that nothing must be said about persons who are still alive. As we approach the twentieth century, of course, the proportion of these becomes more preponderant, and the void caused by their absence more embarrassing. I hope that Miss Ethel Smyth is keeping an interleaved copy of her second volume, in which she is inscribing caustic comments on the living which will be the sustenance of future curiosity. For my own part, I shall be glad to get her safe back to London, since I confess that the chatter of her German associates in Leipzig is often vastly unpleasing to me. We may easily tire of contemplating so vivacious and intelligent an Englishwoman as nothing better than a "Weib und gute Brahmsianerinn."

When they speak of Miss Ethel Smyth's book, I notice that some reviewers rashly compare it with the *Confessions* of Rousseau. I always deprecate these parallels between ancient classics and unclassed novelties of the hour, but in this instance the comparison seems particularly inept. When the *Confessions* are mentioned, what is meant? Rousseau's famous irregular masterpiece consists of two portions so unlike one another as to be hardly reducible to a common standard. The earlier part, idyllic, sentimental, and—with startling exceptions—innocent, is largely a work of the imagination. It is rosy with Rous-

seau's implicit praise of self. We see him plucking the periwinkle of an ideal existence. There is no venom here; even such a "confession" as that of the theft of the riband and the accusation of poor Marion is intended to please. I see no similarity, or extremely little, between life at Les Charmettes and the sturdy domestic scenes at Frimhurst which Miss Smyth recounts.

But the second part of each work is still more independent. In the continuation of the *Confessions*, we have a Rousseau alarmed and suspicious, who has wholly repudiated the romance of youth, and who shelters his misanthropy in an "édifice de ténèbres profondes et impénétrables." Neither in the temper, nor in the substance, nor in the mode of Miss Smyth's narration does there seem to me to be any sort of resemblance to either disposition of the strange genius of Rousseau, to the pastoral romantics of Annecy, or to what Mme. de Boufflers called "those infamous Memoirs which are like the Confessions of a stableman." If Miss Smyth must be compared with any reputed autobiographer, we may think of her as more like Benvenuto Cellini than like Rousseau.

The interest of *Impressions that Remained* does not lie in the incidents recorded, nor even in the other persons described, but mainly in the revelation made of Miss Ethel Smyth's own character and temperament. She describes her brothers and sisters as "a naughty and very quarrelsome crew," and herself as being the most rebellious of the pack. She takes a grim pleasure in recording that, dogged as were all the six Miss Smyths, she is the only one "who has ever been really thrashed." It was done by means of a knitting-needle two and a half feet long, "with an ivory knob at the end." The faults of these unruly young persons, however, seem never to have been worse than are naturally produced by inexhaustible high spirits, acting, in the case of Miss Ethel, on a character naturally

endowed with an almost superhuman store of obstinate pertinacity. Her faculty for sudden biting has, it would seem, always been that of a bull-dog, but the vigour of the snap has been as nothing beside the inability to let go what she has bitten. The whole memoir is a monument of tenacious determination, not merely in matters such as the choice of a profession and of a residence, carried out against the wishes and even the earnest prayers of every responsible relation, but in the romantic passions and devoted infatuations from the bondage of which she has never been able to deliver herself.

Since early childhood, the author tells us that "turbulent love agonies" have occupied as much of her attention as was not absorbed by her music, and indeed the music seems to have been a sort of vocalisation of the turbulent agonies. She is able to look back on the storm and stress of her youth with a touch of humour which redeems its extravagance. "Wild passions for girls and women a great deal older than myself made up," she says, "a large part of my emotional life, and it was my habit to increase the anguish of love by fancying its object as prey to some terrible disease which would shortly snatch her from me."

When she reached Germany, and was isolated from all the conventionality of English tradition, these passions became the centre of her existence, and they occupy the most vivid part of her book. She was introduced to a trio of Teutonic female sentimentalists, of whom a certain Lisl Herzogenberg was "the last and best beloved." This unsympathetic figure fills chapters of the Memoirs of Miss Ethel Smyth, who does not seem to realise what an unworthy object of her devotion this cold and disloyal German prig really was. And this is a curious feature of Miss Smyth's book, that her own ardent and generous nature pours a flame of emotion over figures which she still ardently admires, but the poverty of which is betrayed by the

illumination of her own words. These German pedants of the Leipzig Conservatorium were the most trumpery people in the world, but her enthusiasm contrives to clothe them with beauty so long as it flashes upon their poor second-rate faces. When once this flame is diverted we see them again in their mediocrity.

From the impassioned raptures about Lili Wach and Lisl Herzogenberg, and the rest of the Leipzig sentimentalists, the ordinary reader will turn with relief to the occasional episodes, many of which are recounted with extraordinary gusto and skill. How the author put on an old woman's dress and painted wrinkles on her face that she might attend a concert from which young girls were excluded; how she took a walking tour alone in the Apennines, and fell in with an only too-hospitable Barone; how she was engaged for three brief weeks to Willie Wilde, the brother of Oscar; how she went hunting in the Sologne; such passages as these are wholly delightful. Whenever her great Viennese mongrel, Marco, appears on the scene, our attention brightens. Miss Smyth makes no pretension to be a judge of literature, but she produces excellent accidental criticism, as when she describes the *House of Life* of Rossetti as "a vast mysterious place full of glades and birds, wild flowers and bracken."

LEONARD COURTNEY

LEONARD COURTNEY

We need some word to express our admiration of a public figure when it is modified by a certain consciousness of its limits. If a man is refused the epithet "great," the critic is charged with ill-will, with a desire to belittle and to depreciate. The late Lord Courtney offered clear elements of "greatness." He was in possession of high and unusual intellectual gifts, which he cultivated with pertinacity; he was honest, fearless, and unselfish; as an early companion of his career observed, he was "hard-working, thoughtful, and unexcitable." His qualities were firmly defined, and his exercise of them strenuous and consistent. Yet no one outside the circle of those who shared his idiosyncrasies will say that he was "great," in the front line of greatness. His talents and character were excluded from consummate success by the over-development of a single merit. That a man, in whatever walk of life, should follow a definite line of conduct and that he should be actuated by unshaken principle, is not merely desirable, it is essential. But we live in a world that is made up of many things, and it is absolutely necessary that personal conviction should sometimes be melted in the common cause. This is what is called the inevitable compromise. What prevented Lord Courtney from reaching the highest sphere of usefulness was that he declined to admit that concession was inevitable, so that he became the victim of his own impenitent individualism.

In 1885, when he was making one damaging attack after another upon his own party, his friends expostulated with him. He replied that he was "incurably addicted

to the right of private judgment." This was a few months after, by what must be called his quixotic and rather absurd, though entirely conscientious resignation of office, he had cut short, and for ever, his brief experience as a Minister. He was never in the Cabinet, and it is inconceivable that he could have worked for a week with any set of colleagues. He was not fitted to yield to a Prime Minister's convenience or to bend to any combination of argument. He once said to a Parliamentary aspirant—the remark is not, I think, repeated by Mr. Gooch : " Be true to your own principles, and never mind being in a party of one."

Courtney enjoyed nothing more than to be solitary, and the fewer supporters he found for a theory, the more deeply convinced he was of its wisdom. He could only have ruled as a despot, moulding the world to his own ideal without the least regard for general opinion. He might have been a modern Miltiades, forcing people to be free and happy and good against their wills. When Gladstone differed from him, Courtney detected in him a " thoughtless levity " ; he could work with Chamberlain for a little while, until they did not quite see eye to eye, and then Chamberlain's tone instantly became " detestable." There was a curious apparent discord between Lord Courtney's private courtesy and kindliness and his public rigidity. But the latter was really the result of an individualism gone wild. As nothing is more dull than conformity, it is his sublime disregard of the variations of human nature which makes the study of Lord Courtney interesting and amusing.

As those who are familiar with Mr. Gooch's numerous contributions to political history would expect, the revelation is in many respects excellently made. The author of the *Life of Lord Stanhope* has a practised pen. In the earlier part of this biography the interest is very well maintained, and the proportions are not disregarded. Leonard Courtney entered Parliament in 1877, at the age of forty-five. His career up to that time occupies Mr.

Gooch through 118 pages, and 200 more would have been ample, and more than ample, to chronicle the remaining forty years. Unfortunately, Mr. Gooch expends 500 on them, and the final effect is wearisome. Little that Mr. Gooch himself says is redundant, and if he had preserved the form of a monograph, there would have been nothing to complain of. Doubtless he has been the victim of family pressure, and has found himself forced to put in abundant passages from letters, articles, and even speeches which are often tedious in themselves, and tend to divert attention from the subject of the book.

Leonard Courtney was a picturesque and original person, of whom it was desirable to preserve a vivid portrait. The man himself was precious, not his opinions on Home Rule and the South African War and Tariff Reform, which were valuable only so far as they illustrated his generous idealism and his unflinching individualism. They should have been treated distinctly but briefly. Mr. Gooch himself compares his hero to Cassandra. Who wants to dwell, after a couple of generations, on the menacing predictions of a prophet who was always misinformed?

In 1901, at the age of sixty-nine, Leonard Courtney dictated some recollections of his childhood, and with these Mr. Gooch starts his memoir. These notes, in their brevity and simplicity, are both valuable and essential. Without them we should know nothing of the environment of Courtney's youth, and little of the soil in which the vigorous fibres of his nature found nourishment. He was born at Penzance on July 6, 1832; his father, then a small schoolmaster, had been assistant to a linen-draper; his mother was an orphan from the Scilly Islands, whose mother kept a grocer's shop. "A submissive piety was the note of the household," which was set up in "great faith" and supported by a wonderful cheerfulness and unity. It presented an example of that bed-rock Puritanism, narrow (if you will), but solid and noble, which

has dowered England with so many strongly featured individual characters. It was a household not without culture, especially in music, and later on in poetry, but the dominant features of it were courage and probity and independence in the face of poverty endured without complaint. The main interest of Leonard Courtney's boyhood lay in literature; it is interesting to note that he was a man before he awoke from a complete indifference to home politics, though he early became attracted by European schemes of republicanism.

His father having now become cashier at the Bolithos' bank at Penzance, Leonard left school at thirteen, and entered the bank as a clerk, his father with happy prescience arranging that he should do no evening work, so that he might study at home. This he did for six years, with such results that he was able, in 1851, to travel to Cambridge and win a sizarship at St. John's. Frugal as were his habits at the University, his father had to borrow from the bank to make up the deficiencies of the young man's finance. It is highly characteristic that one of Leonard's first acts when he began to earn money was to pay back this debt. His parents' letters to him at Cambridge are significant and pathetic; from their remote Cornish home they watched him with anxiety and suspicion. They feared, as Puritan parents used to fear, the wiles of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but these powers of darkness never had the smallest chance of winning approval from Leonard Courtney. He faced them, as he long afterwards faced the majority of the House of Commons, with masculine contempt.

He continued in the path of the sober, laborious student until, four years later, his name appeared as that of Second Wrangler in the Honours List. His parents, always anxious, received the news without elation. His mother wrote: "You must not feel proud or exalted in your present position, but remember where much is given much will be required," and the remark exemplifies the Puritan flame in which the steel of Courtney's character was tempered.

His career now began to open out. He was called to the Bar in 1858, and again his mother remarked that "Where much is given much is required." Even then she could recognise no swan in her ugly duckling, and years more of strenuous labour were needed to set at rest her apprehension of moral and spiritual dangers. Leonard was not destined, however, to win distinction as a barrister, and he held but one brief in his legal career. He turned to teaching and to journalism for a living, and was the unsuccessful candidate for several professorships. He was over thirty when he secured his position by becoming a leader-writer on *The Times*, while he gradually grew to be recognised as an authority on economics.

The pet schemes of his life began to take shape, Proportional Representation being the earliest and the best-beloved of them, that darling of his brain which was foremost in his hopes for forty years, and whose initials were murmured by his dying lips; at the age of forty-four he drifted into Parliament as Member for Liskeard in his native county. From that moment almost to the day of his death he was a prominent and familiar figure in national and international life. The story must now be pursued in Mr. Gooch's illuminating pages, and it will be found to contain no surprises for those who have followed Lord Courtney's career from the middle distance. In his innermost conduct he was exactly what he always seemed to be, narrow and inelastic in his prejudices, rather deep than broad, but essentially generous. There was nothing paltry or small about him. He was proud, but with what Voltaire distinguishes as "l'orgueil des grands." He stated in clear terms what his conscience told him was right, and he was little concerned about the suffrages or the esteem of other people.

As we turn Mr. Gooch's pages, the rugged figure of later years rises to the memory. We see him in his long, snuff-coloured coat and yellow linen waistcoat, with his rough, genial countenance, facing Parliament, as he faced the world,

" a party of one." In 1906 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman raised him to the peerage, and it was confidently said that this meant the close of Courtney's public career. No greater mistake was ever made; the new peer of Penwith was, from the first, an assiduous attendant at the House of Lords, and a frequent speaker almost till the time of his death.

Mr. Gooch writes as though he never heard Lord Courtney in the Upper House. The Lords are not without their prejudices, and there have been statesmen to whom they could not listen without irritation. This was not the case with Lord Courtney, who, nevertheless, outdid all other speakers in persistent exposition of theories of which the Peers disapproved.

I remember but a single occasion—in August 1914, when he protested against our entrance into the war—when he was interrupted and called upon to sit down. Even on that occasion, his grim imperturbability disarmed opposition. I used to suppose that, being, if not blind, very dim of vision, he was not aware of the indifference of his audience or of their tendency to steal away to the tea-room. His custom was to stand erect in his place, glancing neither to left nor to right, and to speak out loudly, sparing neither friend nor foe. But after reading Mr. Gooch's memoir, I see that if Lord Courtney had enjoyed perfect vision and even penetration into the minds of men, he would not have swerved one iota from his path. The House respected him for his intellectual disinterestedness, and everybody loved him for his private qualities. He was allowed to talk for an hour at a time about Woman Suffrage and Proportional Representation because he was Leonard Courtney, and he grew to be an institution, which might be incomprehensible, and was often wearisome, but of which the Peers were proud. All who had the honour of knowing him will join Mr. Herbert Fisher in proclaiming the " glorious courage and absolute disinterestedness " of Lord Courtney of Penwith.

PAUL CLAUDEL

PAUL CLAUDEL

To a wild Welsh hamlet where the infant Wye, a thread of silver down the monstrous flank of Plynlimmon, dances with trout that mock the wiles of the angler, I have brought an armful of books by the prime French favourite of the moment. I have been trying, with an open mind, to discover what is the real value of the poetry of M. Paul Claudel, whom Paris takes so seriously and London so imitatively. Let me confess that in past years I have not been able to join the choir of the mænads of West Kensington around the Claudelian altar, but I am constitutionally open to persuasion, and I have sought enlightenment from the Cymric deities, so propitious to a cloudy and oracular style in verse.

Perhaps I ought to say at once, before I recant, what my heresy has been. M. Paul Claudel, who is now the Minister of France at the Court of Copenhagen, has spent his life in the Consular service—in Germany, in Brazil, I know not where else. He is some fifty years of age, and I recollect that about a quarter of a century ago he published a dramatic piece called *Fête d'Or*, of which Rémy de Gourmont, most indulgent of critics to eccentric young geniuses, said frankly that he did not know what it was about. Then followed a long period during which we—or I, at least—heard nothing of M. Claudel. Then, a few years before the war, he began to pour out dramas and hymns and odes, which were laughed at at first, and then wondered at, and now are lifted to the very highest pinnacles of "snobisme."

For my own part, till I sought illumination from the bardic vapours of Plynlimmon, I remained in the condition of wonderment. This was not because the new poet is revolutionary in all matters of versification, a scorner of logic, a cultivator of every species of eccentricity, since these are in the order of the day. I have to admit that there is something in the very nature of M. Claudel, as he reveals himself in his writings, that repels me as an Englishman. I find it difficult to believe that his English admirers are quite honest with themselves in their raptures. M. Claudel, I believe an excellent Ambassador, is certainly not diplomatic as a poet. He loves to outrage the civilities, and in a way which does not amuse me. He wishes to sweep the immediate past out of existence; he has denounced Victor Hugo and Renan as " des infâmes."

Now, the young author who calls the noblest poet and the richest prose-writer of the age immediately preceding his own " infamous," does not appeal to my sympathy. He may be daring, but in this instance he seems to be stupid. M. Claudel is not stupid, but he is what I think is worse—he is bigoted. He represents the neo-Gallic spirit of " devotion " in its most arrogant and illiberal form. Hence the scorn poured on great precursors who wrote admirably, but were Free Thinkers. In our Anglo-Saxon world we are accustomed to a broader toleration, and that is one reason why I cannot think the English worship of the poetry of M. Claudel and of his friend M. Jammes quite genuine. There is, or ought to be, a gulf fixed between our national temperament and the furious sacerdotalism of *La Messe là-bas* and the *Cinq Grandes Odes*.

The genius of M. Paul Claudel—and he possesses what can only be defined as genius—expresses itself in drama and lyric, but the lyrical poems are so theatrical and the drama so lyrical that the two are easily studied together. Nevertheless, it is better to approach M. Claudel on his

dramatic side, because the faults which do so obstinately beset him are less obvious in his plays than in his canticles. When he abandons himself to his strange infatuated rhapsodies, he is apt to lose the thread of his intention, and to wander about in a cloud of noble words, from the midst of which proceed magnificent flashes of imagery and eloquent detonations of thought. But his plays are almost always clearer than his cantatas, more external, more vivid; there have to be characters in them who move and speak; there have to be localities which are made visual to us. Moreover, in his plays M. Claudel sometimes (not very often, but sometimes) forgets to preach, and when he is not thumping the dust with his fist out of some liturgical cushion he can be thrilling and even amusing. My knowledge of his work is, I confess, not exhaustive yet, but so far as I have advanced I have found nothing so thrilling as *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, and nothing so diverting as *Protée*. It cannot but be favourable to the reputation of M. Claudel to contemplate these two dramas.

There can be no question that *L'Annonce faite à Marie* is a production of extraordinary force. It is more than that, it is a work instinct with a sort of magnificence very rare indeed in modern literature. I have no hesitation in saying that I put it a full storey higher than anything else of its author which I have read. At the very threshold of it I gape at his incurable ecclesiasticism, because, so far as, after long meditation, I can perceive, there is nothing in it from first to last which dimly suggests the miracle of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin. It is a realistic scene, slightly and casually supernatural, from the late mediæval society of France. Rheims Cathedral is being finished; it is the work of Pierre de Craon, who is a leper. Violane Vercors, the daughter of a rich neighbouring farmer, consents, without any emotion but that of pure philanthropy, to kiss the architect on the lips. He, in consequence, loses

his disease, but Violane becomes a leper, and sacrifices everything which was about to crown her life with beauty and joy.

Her father, Anne Vercors, is starting on a crusade to the Holy Land when the drama opens. The landscape, the incidental movements of the persons, the strange and solemn symbols which appeal to a mediæval conscience, all these are described with a vividness which is sometimes all the more blinding because of M. Claudel's explosive manner of expression, a manner quite peculiar to himself. Heroic passions, dolorous abnegations, turbulent and sterilising scruples, are illuminated throughout by an intensity of language which is sometimes almost terrifying, at other times exquisitely attractive.

The entertaining work I have mentioned is the drama of *Protée*. Here M. Paul Claudel forgets for once that he is a preaching friar, and only remembers to be the most fantastic and delirious of farce-writers. The scene is laid immediately after the Trojan War, in the island of Naxos, which floats about in the Ægean Sea like a huge frosted wedding-cake, the abode of the eccentric Proteus. Menelaus, whose ship has been driven ashore, lands, dragging Helen by the hand, and is met by the nymph Brindosier, who, but for a sad little pair of horns among her hair, showing her goatish ancestry, would be a wholly delicious personage. With the help of Proteus she becomes so exactly like the real Helen that Menelaus no longer knows which is which. There is a chorus of satyrs in attendance on the nymph Brindosier, and Proteus has a bodyguard of seals—"mes phoques"—whom he vainly tries to instruct in the principles of compound arithmetic. Menelaus steals the magic spectacles of Proteus, and turns Naxos head over heels. The two Helens, the true and the false, after terrible rancours, make friends over the latest Trojan fashions. It is not possible to mention a tithe of the incidents which

enliven this boisterous and animated farce, one of the most exuberant and picturesque things in modern literature, quite worthy to take the place of that lost satiric play of *Proteus* which Æschylus is known to have prefixed to his trilogy of the " Oresteia."

If all the writings of M. Paul Claudel were like *Protée* and *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, I should not be wandering disconsolate down the banks of the Wye; I should be building an altar of turves to his worship and trying to steal a Welsh lamb for the sacrifice. But, unhappily, in other of his works, while preserving in a very curious way his essential characteristics of intensity and spasm, he falls so far below his best as to fill the reader with alarm. The same volume which contains *Protée* presents us with a sort of choral drama called *La Cantate à Trois Voix*, in which there are splendid rhapsodies, but which, as a whole, I find entirely unintelligible. The obscurity is not merely one of language, but of thought. I read pages of *La Cantate* over and over again, and they remain completely incomprehensible. Now it is all very well for the French, with the infinite variety of their literature, to indulge themselves in any kind of experiment they please. Their poetry has been so limpid, so reasoned, so logical, that they can afford a burst of spasmodic obscurity. French literature has been good for so long a time that it must be excused for sowing its wild oats in Mallarmé and Rimbaud, and, even now, in Paul Claudel. But I hold it affectation and worse, in English readers, to profess a wild enthusiasm for these outlaws, until they have exhausted all the charm of the pure French classics. But this is too wide a subject to be expanded here.

Since the war M. Paul Claudel has produced three new works. All three are issued by that admirable Parisian firm La Nouvelle Revue Française, whose publications are so beautiful and yet still so cheap as to raise the question

whether the increased prices charged by other publishers for inferior goods are not exaggerated or even unnecessary. The new Claudels consist of a species of rhymed liturgy, *La Messe là-bas ;* a farce for marionettes, *L'Ours et la Lune ;* and a religious drama, *Le Père humilié.* The best of these is *La Messe là-bas,* a chain of sacerdotal reflections made by a solitary in Brazil. This work is written in a form hitherto unexampled, I think, in poetry, namely, in couplets of lines of uneven length, which wander on and eventually rhyme. We have comic analogies in Swift and Hood, but I recollect no serious example. Some of these rhapsodies are very beautiful, in the cloudy Claudelian manner; for instance, the luxuriance of the tropical scene in the piece called " In Principis " and the extraordinary vividness of " Lectures " are admirable. There is a good deal of Arthur Rimbaud in *La Messe là-bas,* and also of Coventry Patmore, whose ecclesiastical odes M. Claudel has closely studied.

Of the other new works less that is favourable can be said. *L'Ours et la Lune* is altogether beyond me; its incoherence borders upon lunacy; it seems to have a bearing upon the late war, but to my apprehension it is a specimen of *opéra bouffe* for maniacs.

The *Père humilié* is more serious; its scene is Rome; the date 1869 to 1871. Pensée de Coufontaine is the beautiful only daughter of the French Ambassador to the Vatican. She has been blind from birth and her mother is a converted Jewess. The scene opens in the gardens of Prince Wronsky, where a costume ball is being given in honour of the Pope's birthday. It is a peculiarity of Pensée that she can conceal the fact of her blindness by her adroit intuitions, and that she possesses a magic stone of clairvoyance. Hence the Pope's nephews, Orian and Orso de Homodarmes, who fall violently in love with her, are not aware that she cannot see, although they traverse the gardens in her company. Pensée is a Liberal, and opposed

to the Church; the two Homodarmes are fanatical supporters of the temporal power of the Pope. The brothers apply to their uncle to decide which of them shall marry Pensée, whose own decision continues to be doubtful. His Holiness strongly disapproves of the union of either of them with a free-thinking blind Jewess, but finally yields his consent to Orian. But in September 1870, the Piedmontese capture Rome, and the brothers leave for the French war against Prussia. At the close Orian, by whom Pensée is about to become a mother, is killed by the Germans, and Orso brings his brother's head to Pensée in a great basket of magnolias and tuberoses, like that of young Loronzo in *The Pot of Basil*. Orso promises to guard her and her coming child.

This strange drama contains several scenes which are conceived and executed with skill. In the second act, where the arrogance of the Pope is broken down by the austerity of the familiar Franciscan monk who confesses him; the dialogue in which Orso and Orian, with a noble excess of loyalty, plead not each his own cause, but each that of the other; the close, where Pensée bends over the terrible basket ("Why is the odour of these flowers more intoxicating for me than that of laurel—laurel that speaks of victory?")—these and other individual passages, which are choral tirades rather than conversation, are of a high lyrical beauty. Their symbolism and their rhetoric intoxicate the reader, who, like Isabella when she "hung over her sweet Basil evermore," has "no knowledge when the day is done."

But the symbolism of M. Claudel, which was always perplexing, has never been more disconcerting, nor his purpose, underneath the intense Catholic suggestion, more uncertain. He is, like his blind heroine, the victim of obscure ardours and bewildered intuitions; while, in the midst of his rich imagery and the perpetual grandiloquence

of his tirades, we are apt to lose sense of reality and nature. We wander by impassable streams in a vague but volcanic world of twilight superstitions. Such is the impression which M. Claudel's work continues to leave on at least one candid mind.

His new piece is entitled *Le Père humilié,* but if I am asked why, it is I who am humiliated, for I have not the least idea.

A BUBBLE BURST

A BUBBLE BURST

An advertisement, blazoned within and without the volume, announces that 131,000 copies of *The Young Visiters* have been sold. I wonder what my admirable friend Sir James Barrie thinks now of the success of his practical joke? I dare not ask him face to face; I should feel that I was committing an indiscretion if I referred to such a painful subject. In a spirit of waggery he uncorked a dull-looking bottle of lollypops, and, behold, there poured forth from it what must have been the last thing that Sir James expected to emerge—a thick, an unceasing cloud of mystification. To change the image, Sir James, an adept in these sports, gaily pulled the leg of the public, and lo! that leg stretched and stretched, and could not be made to stop stretching, and now surpasses in uncouth longitude all the other legs of the age we live in.

In pure philanthropy, in order to put some money in the pocket of the writer of a childish tale, Sir James Barrie declared that the tale was funny. He is the kindest-natured of men, and ready to think the best of everybody; no doubt he had the complacency to smile here and there over the puerilities of *The Young Visiters*. But he must now, as Miss Ashford would put it, be "sorry he spoke." Of that appeal to the imbecility of the imitative public 131,000 copies have been sold during a few months, in which the combined sales of Mr. Conrad, Mr. Galsworthy, and Mr. Beresford, added to those of all the clever novelists who "also ran," were doubtless hardly perceptible in comparison. Marvellous great blundering British Public and

sly Sir James Barrie, with his tongue in his wicked cheek! "This perfect gem of fiction," it is called by its admirers in the Press, exposes a condition of "taste" in this country which would draw tears from the eyes of a potato.

If we consider the spread of infantile education, and the frequency of pens and paper in our nurseries, we may congratulate ourselves on the comparative rarity of published works by prodigies. The enormous success of Miss Ashford threatened us with a new terror. When Ruskin had reached the age at which *The Young Visiters* was written, he published an *Enquiry into the Causes of the Perforation of a Leaden Pipe by Rats*, but, although of so useful a character, this essay passed almost unperceived. Elizabeth Barrett read Homer in Greek, and wrote verses at the age of eight, but her parents, though violent and fond, spared the public an exhibition of her early poems. Other relatives, in various cases, have shown less reserve, yet the result has never been overwhelming. Many little geniuses have babbled in the bassinette, but their nurses have only mentioned the fact to one another, and the novels of little girls of twelve have scarcely ever been read in tens, while Miss Ashford has been read in tens of thousands.

It was an awful prospect stretching before us that, for the future, the real field of the novelist's fruitful activity would lie between the ages of nine and fourteen, that literary success would close when the gifted authoress first put up her hair, and that she would lay down the pen when she began to be able to write without ruled lines. From this threatened revolution, however, the authoress of *The Young Visiters* herself relieves us, since she has been so astonishingly ill-advised as to publish a batch of five more novels. If the British public will stand these, it is like the Prophet Habbakuk, "capable de tout."

In *The Young Visiters* there were, as the careful reader of that "gem" could not help believing, flashes of extrane-

ous humour, of intentional incongruity, which were not entirely without attractiveness. Whether it was possible that a little girl of twelve should of her own accord speak of a young man as having been born "a gentleman on the wrong side of the blanket" may be disputed, but such things might be smiled at, though they were not very refined. These beauties were not frequent enough to justify the rapture of the newspaper-man who (as I learn from the advertisement) described *The Young Visiters* as "just one long gurgle of joy," but they presented a certain excuse for indulgence. Now Miss Ashford, having far surpassed all the grown-up male novelists, and holding almost within her reach the laurels of Mrs. Barclay and Miss Ethel M. Dell, drops—as is her right—any pretence to mock-modesty, and ushers in her new five novels (one of them by an infant sister) with the utmost assurance. Her preface is very pleasing; in fact, it is much more of a human document than any of the tales themselves. Her frank confession: "You say that I'm funny? I am," might serve as the last line of a limerick. She takes herself with the utmost seriousness. Of *The Hangman's Daughter* (one of these effusions) she says: "I always consider it the greatest literary achievement of my youth," and not otherwise could George Eliot have spoken of *Adam Bede*. Let us examine these unclouded "gems" of infant genius.

The first of them, *Love and Marriage*, is not quite as limpid as the rest. It is perfectly vapid, but a turn of phrase every now and then startles the reader. Miss Ashford mentions in her preface that she was in the habit of reading her novels aloud to her brothers, and that they "laughed." When, in the sentimental scene of the wedding, we are suddenly told that the heroine showed "red, beef-coloured hands," and that "the bare legs" of the bride-groom (whose complete dress has been described just above) "were not much appreciated," I think I detect the rude

interpolation of a brother. Again, in *Leslie Woodcock*, where the wedding breakfast is detailed as "a slice of roast pork and suet pudding and treacle, and beer and soda mixed, that is a mild B. and S., my dear," the pen may be the pen of Daisy, but the voice is that of a brother home from school. May we not hope to be indulged with "perfect gems of fiction" by more than one Master Ashford? Why let one sex monopolise all these "creations of sheer delight"?

In *The Hangman's Daughter*, on the other hand, there is no trace of masculine interference. Into this novel Miss Ashford tells us she "put solid work" when she was fourteen years of age, and she recounts the effect of it on her first audience with lingering complacency. In one of the scenes in this volume the leading character is presented to us, absorbed in a "shilling shocker." That is exactly what *The Hangman's Daughter* is; it is a perfectly serious and perfectly dull "shilling shocker." The only reflection which its perusal leaves with us is that the author, after some training and experience, might in process of time have succeeded in contributing with approval to the *Family Herald*. But the person who can now laugh over its pages would be capable of finding the Burial Service amusing.

Where the tales of Miss Ashford do not reflect the sensational novelette of the kitchen, they are under the influence of the American sentimental fiction of the mid-Victorian age. They carry about with them a smack of *The Wide, Wide World* and a whiff of *Queechy*; they faintly remind an elderly reader of *The Lamplighter* and of *Ellen Montgomery*, those faded romances whose very names now sound dim and faint, like the tunes of a hurdy-gurdy heard in the evening three streets off. These stories dwelt at great length on what the heroines ate and how they were dressed, and Miss Ashford resembles them in this. Her characters help themselves to strawberry jam while they are busy

" putting some embroidery " on a white petticoat. They buy jewellery, " two bracelets and a brooch," and wear these adornments when they sit down to a dinner consisting of pea soup, bacon, and green cabbage, merangues and chocolate pudding, the whole served upon gold plate. But the foolish old stories of Miss Warner and Miss Cummins had one negative merit, they were hysterical and commonplace, but they were not " common," and they were not prurient. They did not try to get a laugh by describing how two unmarried lovers spent their night in a garret, nor how a girl asked a man whether he could " manage to give her a baby." It would be difficult to get further from all that makes a child's mind attractive, from all that is fresh and genuine and simple, than in the chapter called " The Lodgings " in the novel of Miss Ashford named *Leslie Woodcock.*

It is, in my opinion, a sign of decay that such " novels " as these should find so many rapturous readers, and I hope that the impenetrable dulness of the latest batch of them may recall the public to some common sense. If the nature of a child is not exquisite, it is not worthy of record, and it is almost as shocking that an infant should be vulgar as that a soldier should be cowardly or a nun unchaste. Victor Hugo addresses his grandchildren :—

> " Êtres purs et joyeux, meilleurs que nous ne sommes,
> Enfants, pourquoi faut-il que vous deveniez hommes ? "

When the vision of childhood fades into the light of common day the delicacy departs, and we may laugh as loudly as we can at the vulgarities of the grown man or woman. But to revel in an exhibition of a child's mind as something no less squalid and mean, in its lower-middle-class snobbery and silliness, than those of the adults around it—this seems to me an offence against good manners.

To object to what others think funny is always dangerous,

and I hardly know how to face the Higher Criticism which calls the writings of Miss Ashford "just one long gurgle of joy." I must simply leave my fellow-reviewers gurgling. But I would say to them, in immortal words :—

> "The islanders of Rumtifoo
> Are well-conducted persons, who
> Approve a joke as much as you,
> And laugh at it as such,"

but if they are called upon to listen to a little girl of twelve who talks about a bride with "red, beef-coloured hands," and about a man who was "a gentleman on the wrong side of the blanket,"

> "The joke they would not understand,
> 'Twould pain them very much."

THE CHARACTER OF FIELDING

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If it were desirable to preach a sermon on the vagaries of Mrs. Grundy in the nineteenth century, her treatment of the life and character of Henry Fielding might be taken as the text. I know not, in the history of literature, a stranger record of prejudice and confusion. The freedom of Fielding's works was illustrated by the profligacy of his life, and his life disfigured by fictitious examples borrowed from his works. It was by a miracle that the wholesome vigour of his books kept them a place in the record; they did not always do so; there were Victorian accounts of the English Novel from which the name of Fielding was excluded in the service of virtue. When, at last, in his generous blustering way, Thackeray took up the defence of his great precursor, his excuses, mild as they were, created a scandal. Charlotte Brontë—no less a person!—who adored Thackeray, was shocked beyond measure that her hero should "have spoken in that light way of courses that lead to disgrace and the grave."

By the Victorian public it was not contested that Fielding was a dissipated, worthless fellow, nor that his novels reflected his own abandoned mode of life. He was accepted as the type of the reckless Bohemian, and *Tom Jones* was a book that such a sturdy female as Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe could not dare to be supposed to have read. Even Thackeray, the protagonist, blushed as he admitted that Fielding led "a sad riotous life, and mixed with many a

bad woman in his time." Mr. Wilbur Cross's three volumes, in which, however, I do not find any new facts of signal importance, accumulate a larger amount of detail to illuminate this subject than has been brought together before.

A cloud of censure hung over the fame of Fielding for a century and more after his death. This fact proves what mischief an incompetent biographer can do, since all the confusion started with Arthur Murphy, who prefixed an "Essay on the Life and Genius" to the first collected edition of Fielding's works in 1762. Murphy was a young Irish journalist whom the novelist had befriended, and who subsequently failed as an actor and as a playwright. He meant well, but he was careless and muddle-headed, and he had no sort of talent. Let us conceive what the fate of Johnson might have been had Boswell been a Murphy! He declared that he had at hand "a prodigious number of materials," and he used his intimacy with Fielding as a reason for forestalling all other biographers.

Murphy's "Essay," however, is not merely involved in pompous rhetoric, but it misstates the facts with an inconceivable levity. For a mysterious reason, the cause of which still partly escapes us, even before his death Fielding had become a legendary figure. He was identified in the public mind with the loose characters in his novels; he was Tom Jones and he was Captain Booth; to his enemies, and he had contrived to make a shoal of them, he was almost Jonathan Wild. Murphy's duty, as the biographer-friend, was to dissipate this legend, instead of which he gave colour to it by his vague admission of a course of "wild dissipation" and of the ruin which "excesses of pleasure" and "midnight watches" had wrought in Fielding's constitution. He repeated baseless anecdotes which he took no pains to verify, and fantastic aspersions which strewed the path of Fielding's critics with boulders until Keightley began to clear them away in 1858, unfortunately in a periodical which few readers saw.

By the light of still more recent researches—the result of all of which is summed up in Mr. Wilbur Cross's three imposing volumes—the long-drawn libel on the character of Fielding may be said to be cleared away at last, though some difficulties remain. He was assailed during the Victorian Age by two disadvantages which interacted; these were the legend of his own moral laxity, following the old lines sketched by the philosophical author of *Hermes* and by other hostile contemporaries; and the indelicacy of his narratives, which strangely affected persons whose refinement did not forbid them to read Smollett or to weep over *Clarissa*. To the eighteenth century Fielding had passed as "a broken wit," and his reputation staggered under the vindictive prejudice of such giants of opinion as Samuel Johnson and Horace Walpole. Later the opposition of Sir Walter Scott did him great harm. At length Coleridge spoke out: "I do loathe the cant which can recommend *Pamela* and *Clarissa Harlowe* as strictly moral . . . while *Tom Jones* is prohibited as loose"; and Hazlitt followed suit in a voice not quite so firm.

But to moralists of a hundred years ago, what were Hazlitt and Coleridge themselves? Dangerous fellows, eager to condone errors in conduct and in art. The legend went on swelling; Fielding took the shape of a libidinous buffoon, the author of novels which were directly corrupting to a young mind. So lately as some thirty years ago, in the course of a lecture I myself was giving, in which I was praising the noble manner of *Tom Jones*, a lady, then well known in the philanthropic world, rose in the audience and, interrupting me, protested against praise being given to books "the very names of which should be unknown to a young Christian."

The change in the attitude of readers to the private character of Fielding began about thirty-five years ago, and was due principally to the investigations of Mr. Austin Dobson. Great as is our general debt to that exquisite

student of the eighteenth century, he deserves thanks for nothing more than for his rehabilitation of the author of *Tom Jones*. Mr. Dobson's *Fielding* appeared in 1883, and it presented the novelist in a clear and new and reasonable light.

One curious thing it did was to cut away from his legend certain parasitic growths which had done it permanent injury. Great stress had always been laid on the scandal of Fielding's vagaries at Bartholomew Fair, where he was said to have blown a trumpet in front of a show of wild beasts. This was quoted as an example of how "low" the author of *Amelia* had fallen! But it was a wholly different person, a strolling actor called Timothy Fielding, who blew the trumpet! Then Murphy himself had started a tale of the novelist's squandering his wife's property and his own in preposterous extravagance during his early married days, and had described his "splendid entertainments" and "large retinue of footmen in yellow." But the man who did this was not Henry at all, but a certain Robert, "Beau" Fielding, who was not even a relation.

Another preposterous tale, which Mr. Paul de Castro finally exploded in 1916, was that when Fielding received money to pay his taxes he wasted it before it reached the collector. Mr. Austin Dobson showed that almost every piece of malignant gossip which had been deposited on Fielding's coat was a dab of dry dirt which could be flicked off by disinterested examination.

Encouraged at last to read the works which had so long lain under the ban of being "improper" and "corrupting," the public turned to the books themselves with remarkable avidity. There had been no general collection of them made for many years, and the old octavos had to be picked up on bookstalls. The new curiosity about Fielding was appeased by successive editions of his "Works," that edited by Leslie Stephen (1882) in ten volumes, by Mr. Saintsbury (1893) in twelve, by myself (1899) in twelve, and by Henley (1903), also in twelve volumes. The

released popularity of Fielding was shown by the fact that these four extended and expensive editions were immediately bought up. Not one of them, however, was complete, and Mr. Wilbur Cross makes a fervid appeal for a really exhaustive edition, many of Fielding's pamphlets and several of his poems having never been included in his works. There is also the mysterious *Shamela* (1741), which Mr. Austin Dobson does not mention in his *Fielding*, but of which he gives an interesting analysis in his *Samuel Richardson* (1902).

If, as seems now almost certain, this anonymous *Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* came from Fielding's pen, it is the earliest of all his novels, and ought certainly to be reprinted. It would be a good deed for Mr. Wilbur Cross to undertake a "Complete Works of Henry Fielding," a task for which his industry and enthusiasm appear to fit him well. He needs, however, to keep the latter a little in restraint. We know that Fielding was not the ignoramus which his enemies believed him to be; but Mr. Cross outrages evidence when he declares that "it is doubtful if Eton ever sent out a boy with a better knowledge and appreciation of the classics"!

Mr. Wilbur Cross sets forth, let it be frankly said, with the intention of completely "whitewashing" Fielding. There is danger now of our putting up a spotless figure, all in sham Parian, in place of the bestained and besotted profligate of the Victorian legend. In my judgment Mr. Cross goes too far. Fielding was no such angel of purity as his advocate conceives him. Mr. Cross evades the page in *A Journey from this World to the Next*, where the novelist, feigning to appear at the gate of Paradise, is obliged to admit, "I indulged myself very freely with wine and women in my youth." Minos, with a shake of the head, lets him into Elysium all the same. It is useless to pretend that Fielding, in that coarse age, did not live like his fellows; it is useless to deny that he wasted his money when he settled at East Stour.

His eight years of violent political journalism were years of torment and temptation. He was "Capt. Hercules Vinegar," subject to every wretched contingency of fate. That "elastic gaiety of spirit" which was observed by his cousin, Lady Bute, carried him through to the strenuous but comparatively serene magistracy of his later years; but he had suffered too much in too many gales before he found shelter in the haven of Bow Street. His wonderful physical vigour and gusto were enviable, but they could not last for ever. "It is a pity he was not immortal," another cousin lamented. He was not. He plunged into life, observing "vices, and of a very black kind," observing virtues, too, and those "glowing," as he put it, "in patterns of the amiable in either sex." He was the Novelist of Human Nature, and he was obliged to take punishment along with pleasure in that rough school.

We have but to consider the circumstances to see that there must have been some foundation for all the stories which were current. But why should we not accept the obvious truth and defy Mrs. Grundy? "Stained as you see him, and worn by care and dissipation," the author of *Tom Jones*—if Mr. Wilbur Cross will forgive me for saying so—requires no fretful advocacy of ours. Nor will a truer word be said than was sung by the best and tenderest of his critics at the unveiling of his monument:

> "Let who has known
> Nor Youth nor Error cast the stone!
> If to have sense of Joy and Pain
> Too keen—to rise, to fall again,
> To live too much—be sin, why then
> This was no Phœnix among men.
> But those who turn that later page,
> The journal of his middle age,
> Watch him serene in either fate—
> Philanthropist and Magistrate; . .
> These will admit—if any can—
> That, 'neath the green Estrella Trees,
> No Artist merely, but a MAN,
> Wrought on our noblest island-plan,
> Sleeps with the alien Portuguese."

MR. DOUGHTY'S "MANSOUL"

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On the principle, I suppose, that in these days you must make a very loud noise in order to be heard at all, Mr. Doughty's new poem, *Mansoul*, has been ushered into the world with shawms and trumpets by the little clan of his enthusiastic admirers. The most exorbitant claims have been made for recognition of its merit, and its author has been named as an equal with Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton. At the same time, remarkably little explanation has been vouchsafed of the grounds on which this glorification is founded. We merely have had repeated such epithets as "sublime" and "magnificent," and such nouns as "genius," "splendour," and "beauty." We are told that Mr. Doughty's vision is "beyond the compass of ordinary seers," but not in what it consists. We are told that he rewards students of great poetry "as no one else living rewards" them, and we are haughtily informed that not every reader is worthy of approaching his "unparalleled mastery." To find defects in him is "not to be quite equal" to the privilege of making his acquaintance.

This browbeating of the cultivated public is insufferable, and it is foolish from its own point of view, since the reader who turns from the reviews to the text, and is bewildered by peculiarities which he has not been led to expect, will be very likely to throw the book aside in anger and dismay. I greatly admire the verse of Mr. Doughty, though I prefer the prose of his wonderful *Arabia Deserta*, but I admire the former with certain reserves. I think it essential to admit that his poetical system offers

various difficulties and provokes objection from perfectly honest and highly cultivated readers.

Nothing about Mr. Doughty is commonplace. He is a new poet, so far as publication is concerned, but in years he belongs to the generation of Mr. Hardy, Mr. Austin Dobson, and the Poet Laureate. He far out-loitered the Horatian delay, the *nonum in annum*, and issued nothing until 1906, when *The Dawn in Britain*, a vast fragment of historical verse, in six thick volumes, inaugurated his career as a poet. Since then he has published, in rapid succession, five other works, of which *Mansoul* is the latest, and, as I think, the least successful. But all of them are remarkable for the broad and grandiose effects which they produce, for their archaic stateliness, and for their sumptuous colour; they stalk, like Collins's phantom kings, "in pageant robes and wreath'd with sheeny gold." They are remarkable, too, for their independence of all contemporary or even modern influence, and for a uniformity of execution which is impressive at first, and which grows a little importunate and fatiguing at last.

On the other hand, a course of initiation is required before the poetry of Mr. Doughty can be appreciated at all. In his reaction against inane and flatulent phraseology he hurls the speech of England back six hundred years, and in doing so, and by juggling in the most extraordinary manner with syntax and punctuation, he introduces elements of strangeness and awkwardness which are undeniable. Poetry ought to give immediate pleasure to the ear and mind, and specimens of it which demand systematic defence are so far shown to be of doubtful success. Mr. Doughty is a revolutionary who affects to be a restorer of ancient manners; and who will be more kingly than the King himself. But it is not right that we should have to force ourselves to admire fine poetry. It is the drawback to a full appreciation of Mr. Doughty that he

has attempted to create a new poetic language without sufficient consideration of the passage of time or the requirements of the age he lives in. He runs the danger of incurring the blame which Ben Jonson gave to a reforming poet of his own age—namely, that, in trying to improve our speech, he "writ no language at all."

Let us endeavour to do full justice to the object which Mr. Doughty has had in view in writing his new poem, and to the degree in which he attains it. *Mansoul* is an epic in six books and in blank verse. The poet speaks in his own person and describes a vision, in the mediæval manner made familiar to us by Chaucer and *Piers the Plowman*. He is seated one summer's day on the terrace of a house, when he falls into a trance, in the course of which he prays, being surrounded by the turmoil of opinion in the market-place of Mantown, for moral guidance. His prayer is immediately answered by the apparition of a virgin of divine stature, "with eyes of living light, as stars of God." The poet instantly recognises her as the Muse of Britain, who taught him his art long since when he was the disciple of Colin Clout—that is to say, of Spenser. She leads him through a brazen desolation, where Minimus is sleeping, with whom the Poet seems to be henceforth identified. He enters the Cave of Hertha, in whose garden he falls asleep, and enjoys a vision within a vision of the Sister Muses (I have dared to modernise the punctuation) :—

> "Whilst yet I in that Pleasaunce roamed and gazed,—
> Cool rumbling brook, sliding with liquid foot
> 'Twixt flowery banks, trembling like watery light,—
> I came to a fishpool, mirror of clear skies,
> Where wont the Sisters tire their jacinth locks
> And wind them in thick tress; where feed their hands
> A golden-scalèd voiceless finny drove.
> Then, angry at mine intruded stranger foot,
> Knee-deep in water-mists, loose-strife, flowering rush,
> A ruffling swan, proud warden of that plot,
> Plunged from his nest and vehement breasts outforth."

Conducted out of the garden, he finds the Muse of Britain again, now seated in an ivory stall outside a temple, and she consents to conduct him through the world, as Dante was accompanied by Virgil. They descend to the rusty doors of "Hell's Tremendous House," which fly open and clap to behind their backs. There is a very fine conception of the gate of Death, and of the abysmal gulf beyond Death, where the Poet (and indeed the reader also) is not a little startled to find the ex-Emperor Wilhelm, "werewolf" and "warmonger," bound to a stake of adamant, and gazing in a mirror at his own

> "coxcomb visage and enormous deeds
> Till Time shall cease,"

while an ever-accusing Voice

> "Rings and reverberates in his being's ears."

The pilgrims pass on through the thoroughfare of the world's dead, and meet Buddha, Socrates, the disciples of Plato, Confucius (introduced as "King"), and Zarathrusta. They are spectators of the majestic scene of the Crucifixion of "Jeshúa"; and see, but do not visit, Japan. The close of the poem deals principally with English poetry, with Cædmon, with Chaucer and Langland, and with Spenser. The poet wakes out of the underworld vision, and the poem ends with a solemn mystical celebration in the Cathedral of British Verse.

Such, very rudely and briefly told, seems to be the plot or subject-matter of *Mansoul*, which is built up with a sort of Cyclopean masonry of thought and expression which has no recent counterpart. Mr. Doughty's originality as a poet consists in his consistent employment of a lumbering and almost clumsily massive style, seldom lacking in a vague grandeur, and sometimes, as in the passage I first quoted, extremely rich, but always remote from our present

habits of expression. This is embodied in a ponderous versification which shows no evidence of the author's having read anything later than the beginnings of blank verse at the close of the sixteenth century, as found in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* and in *Tamburlaine*, but here broken up with elisions and arbitrary innovations of accent. The verse moves like a heavy body leaping from slab to slab across a stream.

The general character of Mr. Doughty's style may be described as displaying an apparent simplicity which is really extremely sophisticated. The effect, it is impossible to deny, is excessively fatiguing to the attention, from the uniform artificiality of language, but the reader is rewarded and refreshed by frequent passages of unusual beauty, and by a certain general upliftedness which is the ambrosia in the hard and heavy cup of Mr. Doughty's uncompromising poetry.

One of the unflinching enthusiasts has said that Mr. Doughty carries on the great tradition of British verse. No compliment could be more unlucky, nor fit the recipient of it less conspicuously. With a rougher hand than any other poet of the last hundred years Mr. Doughty scornfully and haughtily breaks with the tradition of British verse. For him our poetry ceases with Spenser. The tradition comes down to us through Milton and Dryden, through Pope and Burns, through Wordsworth and Keats. These writers do not exist for Mr. Doughty, who admits and reveres the genius of Spenser, but descends no lower in the scale. What he seems, if I may conjecture, to wish to do is even to restore a much earlier condition of thought and language. His poetry is really more in keeping with the fourteenth century than with any later age, and he is careful to resemble no modern writer, except Blake in the Prophetic Books (and this may be an accident).

Mr. Doughty's actual coevals are the nameless bards who

wrote unrhymed and alliterative romances, such as *William of Palerme* and *Cleanness*, although he likes to avoid the monotonous amble of the fourteenth century by breaking his verses with a very strong irregular pause.

Mr. Doughty has never read Wordsworth, and therefore does not remember that poetry should be "the language really used by men in a state of vivid sensation." The readers of *William of Palerme* (which is positively not more difficult than whole pages of *Mansoul*) actually spoke the language of the poet, but who now except Mr. Doughty says "see" for "seat," or "sue" for "follow"? What is the use of flooring the unhappy reader with words like "craigstewed" and "scruzed" and "derne"? Mr. Doughty is very fond of "derne"; his pilgrims are "all-suddenly dasht on a derne cliff." It sounds like a mild American expletive. We say "glowworms"; what is gained by writing "glade-worms"? Mr. Doughty is a writer of noble imagination and great force of temper, but he is also fantastic and preposterous. Let us admire in him what is admirable, but not allow ourselves to be bullied into subjection to his eccentricities.

THE SCIENCE OF MANUSCRIPTS

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The exhibition and sale of several remarkably fine collections of ancient manuscripts, and especially of those belonging to Mr. Yates Thompson, have recently awakened curiosity in these exquisite possessions. In particular, the practice of auctioneers in issuing illustrated catalogues, in which pages of manuscript are reproduced in all their splendour of colour, has drawn wide attention of late to these objects as offering a peculiar and even unique interest. But those specimens are mysterious and often unintelligible to hundreds of persons who gaze at them in a respectful admiration, but have no acquaintance with their history, nor any clear idea of the conditions in which they were made or even of their practical utility at the time of their production. The volume, therefore, which Mr. Falconer Madan, one of the most learned of living palæographers, here presents, in a style the most lucid and illuminating which could be desired, is a real acquisition and can hardly be too warmly commended to those who desire to understand what these beautiful missals and books of hours really are, how they were produced, and what have been the adventures of such ornamented written records through the long centuries of their existence.

In our common experience the manuscript continues permanent, even in these days when typed script more and more tends to put an end to it. Still, so long as any one writes a letter with his own hand, and so long as any

housewife enters her expenses in a notebook, manuscripts will continue to be a part of our daily life. It was very different, however, before the invention of printing, and it is an obvious but striking and little-considered fact that until about the year 1450—that is to say, through a far longer period than is represented by all our millions of printed books—the vivid intelligence of successive generations of men found no record except a written one.

We should have no knowledge whatever of Homer or Virgil, none of the progress of ancient or mediæval history, none of the Sacred Scriptures themselves, except what might be vaguely handed down by memory, if letters had never been invented, if paper or parchment had never been manufactured, or if copyists had not been kept busily engaged on the labour of preservation. When we think of the masses of priceless manuscripts which have been destroyed by a hundred agencies, we can but cling with a sort of agonised cupidity to the few that remain. It is the story of the Tarquin over again; the less that survives the more precious becomes that slender survival.

The only exceptions to this universal record by handwriting are so few that they merely serve to emphasise the rule. It is supposed that scratching on bone or stone preceded the use of papyrus, and in later times we think of such records as the Rosetta Stone and of the famous Nicene Creed engraved in silver by order of Pope Leo III., or of the inscriptions at which we gaze with such acute emotion in the museums of Rome. But these examples are of a hieratic or a judicial species, designed to fix certain facts for all time beyond the possibility of destruction. This was no medium in which the lively fancy of the poets or the general instruction of the people could have the patience to express itself.

It is very difficult to understand how the Greeks, at the heyday of their literary activity, preserved and circulated

the writings of their innumerable poets and philosophers. Mr. Madan says that a single play by an obscure dramatist of the fourth century B.C. is the only antique Greek manuscript which survives. What must not have been lost when the Alexandrian Library of Ptolemy Soter was burned! A woman's curse has come down to us, the prayer of a certain Artemisia calling down divine vengeance on the father of her dead child, who deserted her without leaving her with even the money she needed to bury it. What a pathetic waif to have survived all the verse of Euripides and the prose of Plato!

Even more extraordinary is the entire disappearance of the highly-civilised culture of Rome in its original shape. Mr. Madan reports the existence of no specimen of Latin writing which can claim to be earlier than A.D. 53. Yet we know that in the Augustan Age the circulation of literature was elaborate and business-like. I am unable to form any idea of the mode in which the famous Latin writers issued their works, which we know were widely read and endured the same vicissitudes as do the printed books of to-day. Sir Edward Ridley's admirable edition of Lucan lies at my hand, and I read in the preface, "The first three Books of the Pharsalia were published, it is thought, in A.D. 62." Setting aside the doubt, such a phrase might be used about Anatole France or Robert Browning.

But what does "published" involve in this context? How did a mass of epic verse in some 2,500 lines pass from the poet to a crowd of purchasers? Martial talks of the publication of his books, of their reception by eager readers unknown to himself, exactly as a poet of to-day might do, and he mentions the very moderate price at which copies were sold. There were armies of scribes, as we know, engaged in copying, but in what medium? It is very difficult to believe that voluminous works were

scratched on wax tablets, though casual notes and business documents might be. At Herculaneum there were found, "reduced to black and desiccated lumps," rolls of papyri, but little information has been gathered from these. It is not beyond the dreams of hope that a collection of ancient Latin literature may even yet be unearthed to decide what else is likely to remain an insoluble mystery.

Conceivably the practice of ancient Rome did not greatly differ from that of the monastic age, about which very full particulars are preserved. Here the tradition of Ireland is exceedingly interesting. In the production of mediæval manuscripts the Irish scribes seem to have led the way, though why and in obedience to what lost tradition is again a mystery. The ornamentation of manuscripts began in Ireland at least as early as the sixth century, and though not a single example of this period survives, we know what the general character of it was. The magnificent Book of Kells, now in Trinity College, Dublin, belongs to the second half of the seventh century, and is not less than a miracle, when we consider that at that date, and indeed for three or four centuries later, England and the continent of Europe produced nothing comparable to it for beauty.

Mr. Madan remarks that it is very hard to suggest any antecedents to the Irish art of the early Middle Ages. But do not the intricate angular patterns and the strange symbolic beasts and winged monsters of *The Book of Kells* owe more than a little to Byzantine tradition? The unequalled beauty of the oldest Irish handwriting is, as Mr. Madan says, "the great marvel in the history of palæography." Both in script and in illumination the contemporaries of St. Colomba must have been led up to by a generation of highly original artists, but who they were we know not, nor whence they drew the sources of their inspiration.

It was not until several centuries later that the great Benedictine monasteries in England rose to an equal sense of the dignity of literature. Much has been said in praise of the encouragement given to art and letters by the Orders, and Mr. Madan feels obliged to damp this enthusiasm a little. Even the largest abbeys scarcely woke to a full appreciation of the claims of books, and the copying was apt to fall into second-rate hands. It was never in England as it had been in Ireland, where to shed the blood of a scribe was as heinous an act as to kill an abbot or a bishop. Nevertheless, in a great Benedictine or Cistercian house the scriptorium was a prominent institution, governed by extremely stringent rules. No copying could be done without the Abbot's special leave, and an officer, called the Armarius, was wholly occupied in looking after the scribes, supplying desks, ink, parchment, pens, pumice-stone, and *tout ce qu'il faut pour écrire.* Each scribe had to work six hours a day, and there were no newspapers in the morning or afternoon tea to lighten his toil :—

"Absolute silence was enjoined; and as, nevertheless, some method of communication was necessary, there were a great variety of signs in use. If the scribe needed a book, he extended his hands and made a movement as if turning over leaves. If it was a missal he wanted, he superadded the sign of a cross; if a psalter, he placed his hands on his head in the shape of a crown (a reference to King David); if a lectionary, he pretended to wipe away the grease which might easily have fallen upon it from a candle; if a small work was needed, not a Bible or a service-book, but some inferior tractate, he placed one hand on his stomach and the other before his mouth. Finally, if a pagan work was required, he first gave the general sign, and then scratched his ear in the manner of a dog."

Impossible to help wishing that in the early days of the Middle Ages, when the despised and rejected classics were mouldering out of existence, more scribes did not pluck up courage to scratch their ears! When the task was done the scribe was allowed to relieve his feelings by a sentiment or a couplet of his own at the end. One mediæval manuscript closes with the ejaculation :—

> "Jesus, mercy! Lady, help!
> For Cutt, my dog, is a perilous whelp."

One wonders whether Cutt had upset the ink or run off with the pen.

The history of words is a fascinating subject, and we are apt to use the common names of things with no recollection of their original meaning. A *codex* was a stump of a tree in Latin, and then a set of sawn boards, and then a book, and finally a manuscript. *Book* itself was Teutonically a beech-tree, and then beechen boards, and finally a volume bound in wood. *Liber*, the bark of a tree, came to be what was written on bark, or on any other substance, and a *library* a collection of such writings. *Paper* was the manufacture from the Egyptian reed papyrus, and ultimately any substance prepared to receive writing. The Greeks called the prepared strips of papyrus *bibloi*, and so bundles of strips with continuous writing on them became *bibles*, until gradually the word was used exclusively for the Book of books. A *volume* was a roll, the long stretch of papyrus rolled up to be put away on a bookshelf. Almost every mediæval manuscript ends with the word "Explicit," which many people suppose to be a verb. Mr. Madan explains that it is merely the contraction of *explicitus*, the book being "unrolled" to the end, and this term continued to be used for ages after the discontinuance of papyrus and the rolling of manuscript. No doubt the Benedictine or Cistercian scribe had not the

least idea what was meant when he joyously wrote "Explicit" at the close of his labours. For him it merely meant that his weary task was done.

The oldest manuscripts are the simplest in character, and the increase in splendour of ornamentation was steady up to the fifteenth century. It is a study in itself to trace the development of draughtsmanship from the crude symbolic shapes of the early Continental schools to the marvellous perfection in reproducing scenes and natural objects which had been reached just before the invention of printing. Combined with the profusion of leaves and tendrils of gold, angels in crimson vesture waving their azure wings, peacocks and pomegranates of amethyst and fire, gorgeous capital letters enclosing miniature scenes of domestic or romantic life, combined with all such elements as these, which made the inside of a missal like a bouquet of hothouse flowers, was the adornment of the outside, where solid figures of bronze in high relief with emerald eyes and ruby wounds, were inlaid in such astonishing profusion of jewelled and ivory bindings as can be seen nowhere to so much advantage as in the Crawford collection of the Rylands Library in Manchester.

But the interior was the great field of ingenuity and beauty. Sometimes the whole page was dyed purple before the gold and red and white illumination was added. To turn over the folio pages of Comte Auguste de Bastard's *Ornaments des Manuscrits* is to be dazzled with the regal splendour of these things. But to begin to understand them the neophyte will do well to take Mr. Madan's *Books in Manuscript* for his guide.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE BLIND

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The lamentable spectacle of blindness with which the War has made us drearily familiar has led to a very wide discussion of the means by which life may be rendered endurable and even enjoyable to these victims of the cruelty of man to man. But the particular form of blindness which has simultaneously occupied the attention of two of the most eminent writers now living is not that caused by the mutilations of the battlefield. Both M. Gide and M. Claudel weave their story round cases of infantile ophthalmia, in one case curable at an advanced age, in the other not.

Ever since another Frenchman, Louis IX., began, in the thirteenth century, to pay attention to the melancholy fate of the blind, there has been some curiosity as to the restrictions and possibilities of those who, to use the Biblical phrase, look out of darkened windows, but it is little more than one hundred years since Edward Rushton —a name ever to be held in honour—started the earliest of those schools for the blind which are happily now so numerous. In each of the remarkable works I have mentioned the author's point of departure is scarcely pathological, but ethical. Each writer illustrates not merely the effect of the external world on the cloistered intelligence of a blind person, but how the presence of that person may affect those whose sight is sound.

There is no more exquisite talent now active in Europe

than that of M. André Gide. He stands apart from the various schools of authorship, and while he seems to be in occasional sympathy with them all, he is plainly affiliated to none. His own work follows no particular line, and, except in style, it is difficult to see any unity of purpose in the Gide who is paradoxical in *Paludes*, whimsical in *L'Enfant Prodigue*, farcical in *Les Caves du Vatican*, and sinister in *L'Immoraliste*. But there is one Gide who shines beyond all the rest,—the delicate and translucent mirror of humility who has given us *La Porte Etroite* and *Isabelle*. It is to this facet of the protean moralist that we owe his new story, *La Symphonie Pastorale*, the earlier scenes of which must rank with his finest creations in this sphere which is so pre-eminently his own.

The wandering quality in M. Gide is very remarkable; I know no recent writer in whom it is so marked. We observe him in one mood, and we prepare to accompany him; but night comes on, and in the morning he has folded his tent like an Arab and has disappeared. But happily the nomad has a trick of returning, and here to-day he is again, as we like him best, placid, austere and evangelical. Let us take advantage of his momentary return, since to-morrow he will doubtless be off to fresh woods and pastures new.

The form in which *La Symphonie Pastorale* is conceived is that of extracts from the diary of a Protestant Swiss pastor, whose name is not divulged. He exercises a cure of souls in a mountain village of the Jura, in the canton of Neuchâtel, not far from La Chaux-de-Fond. One afternoon he is called by a child to come to the help of an old woman living in a remote part of his parish, and he drives there immediately in his gig, guided by the child. He finds the old woman already dead and watched by a neighbour. In the corner of the hovel squats what looks like a heap of rags, but proves to be a girl of about fifteen,

the niece and last survivor of the old woman's family. The neighbour knows nothing about her, save that she was born blind, and seems to be almost an idiot. She never speaks nor responds to the human voice, this being explained (I think a little lamely) by the statement that her old aunt, being herself stone-deaf, never addressed a word to her. She will have to go to the workhouse or the civic asylum.

An immense pity surges up in the heart of the impulsive and sentimental pastor, and he determines without reflection that he will adopt this waif and stray. He lifts her into his gig, and drives her to his home. She is incapable of response, and sinks like an inert mass at his feet. They arrive at the manse, and then the difficulties of the situation begin to occur to him. His wife, a practical and unimaginative matron, already has difficulty in bringing up their considerable family of boys and girls, and desires nothing so little as a blind, perhaps imbecile, and certainly extremely dirty addition to her charge.

However—and this part of the tale is told with extraordinary humour and penetration—Amélie (for that is the name of the pastor's wife) belongs to the class whose bark is worse than their bite. She expatiates in arguments to show that this proposed act of hospitality is preposterous, and that, for her part, five unruly children of her own are as much, and more, than she can put up with. She storms, and the pastor reflects. "As she spoke, some words of Christ rose from my heart to my lips, but I refrained from repeating them, for I have always thought it unseemly to shelter my conduct behind the authority of the Holy Scriptures." Wisely he lets Amélie rave; presently her own native benevolence asserts itself, and after various vicissitudes of temper and despair her motherly instinct gets the upper hand, and she begins to take a pleasure in making the best of Gertrude, for that they decided is to be the blind orphan's name.

But while Amélie and the children find the newcomer more and more a subject of interest, the flame of the pastor's romantic zeal sinks into the ashes of disappointment. The indifference of the child, her obstinate obtuseness, and particularly the hard expression which comes over her face when any one approaches her, reward all kindness with hostility. A famous surgeon from the Val Travers is summoned, and tells the family at the manse that they have no cause for despair. The physical and moral development of the poor girl are alike retarded, but her blindness is her only positive defect. The pastor now patiently begins her education, in which he follows the celebrated example of Laura Bridgman, and his success is continuous and complete.

The parallel is to Gertrude's advantage, for it will be remembered that the marvellous American was not merely blind, but a deaf-mute as well. The difficulty in Laura's case, a difficulty which long seemed insuperable, was that of penetrating to consciousness at all where every communicating sensation, except touch, was absent. But the resemblance of M. Gide's sympathetic heroine to Laura Bridgman consists in the rapidity with which her native intelligence responds to persistent stimulus from without. The pastor is indefatigable, and as his pupil expands and responds, her claim upon his tender care develops into an absorbing affection, the nature of which he is too naïve to perceive. It does not, however, escape the jealous attention of Amélie, nor the curiosity of his own eldest son, who is only a year older than Gertrude.

A climax is reached; the blind girl is about eighteen years of age, when the pastor takes her into Neuchâtel to a concert, where the Pastoral Symphony is performed. The music exercises an overwhelming effect upon Gertrude's senses, and seems to break down the last moral and intellectual barrier between her and the normal world, her blind-

ness only excepted. She is like one drowned in ecstasy, and she asks, " Is what you see really as beautiful as that ? " the harmonies of the composer having painted for her, as it were, a new world, not as we see it, but ineffable in innocence and purity. These transcendental emotions merely inflame to a still higher pitch the passion of the unfortunate and self-deluded pastor.

But a blow falls. He is in his chapel one day, while Gertrude, who has been taught to play, is improvising on the organ. The pastor's eldest son, Jacques, enters without seeing his father, who watches the expression on Gertrude's face as she welcomes one who, evidently, addresses her as a lover. The pastor steals out, stunned but unobserved, his whole aspect of life changed by this revelation. The reader must follow for himself the extremely moving and ingenious scenes which now depict the struggle of the father to retain his false position, the mute but determined resistance of the mother, the piety of the son, and the purity and unconsciousness of the innocent blind enthusiast, moving in her radiant darkness among these tormented souls.

At length the surgeons decide that Gertrude's eyes may be safely operated on, and this is performed with entire physical success; but with her blindness she loses her joy, her serenity, and her unconsciousness of evil, so that the pang of discovery is too sharp for her to endure. She dies, and Jacques, abjuring the Protestant tradition, enters the Church of Rome and takes vows of celibacy. For them all, for the heart-broken pastor himself most of all, the whole episode is a commentary on the divine words : " If ye were blind ye would not have sin ! " In her cecity Gertrude knew no law, and lived. But when her world was invaded by light the commandments asserted themselves, and she could not do otherwise than die.

Such is the conclusion of the story, and thus M. Gide

somewhat brusquely, as it seems to me, cuts the psychological knot which he has been at so much pains to tie. By allowing Gertrude to recover her sight, I feel that the author sinks from a very high and original level to one of mediocrity. Blind girls who miraculously recover the use of their eyes are common objects of the Lyceum Theatre and the Ambigu Comique. I fail to understand how M. Gide—so delicate, so ingenious, so penetrating—was persuaded to accept such a subject as this unless he was prepared to carry it resolutely through. The whole importance of the problem rests on Gertrude's blindness, and the difficulties of her double position in the ministerial household demand an acceptance of this her physical condition. To bring down a surgeon in a machine from the skies is to resign ourselves to melodrama. It is plain to me that as he approached the last pages of *La Symphonie Pastorale*, a certain languor invaded the mind of M. Gide. He was carried away by one of the nomad tricks of his invention. He relaxed his grip of the situation and allowed it to escape him. I earnestly invite him to capture it again, to cancel the present close of his story, and to tell us what became of the minister and Amélie and Jacques when Gertrude, still and irrevocably blind, became conscious at last of the imbroglio which had gathered around her innocence.

THACKERAY'S DAUGHTER

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From Friend to Friend is the last sheaf that we shall bring from a field whence we have never failed to return rejoicing. It is small, but it is all made of clean wheat, and no tares are tied up in the bundle. It has been edited by the author's sister-in-law, Miss Emily Ritchie, and it is enriched by a precious portrait of the author, drawn in 1914. Here Mr. Sargent, with his wonderful discernment of character, gives us a commentary on Lady Ritchie's nature, which almost makes further analysis needless. The pure full arch of the forehead, the smiling eyes, by turns so keen and so vague, the sensitive and mobile mouth, all combine to render that look of exquisite and humorous sensibility, that quaint refinement which were native to the charming original. When we examine the book itself the impression of the portrait is deepened, for these studies of female friends of fifty years ago, seen with the adoring eyes of a girl and retained in the sentimental memory of an aged lady, are in absolute harmony with Mr. Sargent's delicate and illusive charcoal-drawing.

The friends who figure in these pages were affable and majestic figures in the great Victorian Age. Mrs. Cameron, Mrs. Kemble, Mrs. Sartoris, Lady Somers were outstanding personages in a splendid exclusive society which circled, more or less, round Tennyson. They lived in a radiance of mutual admiration, as Mrs. Cameron saw them in a sort of vision, "standing in a circle in the High Hall, singing with splendid voices." Woolner, the sculptor, all eloquent as he was, found "words fail" him when he "spoke of

the Pattle sisters." Mrs. Cameron was a Pattle, and so was Lady Somers. The impression a reader of 1921 gets from Lady Ritchie's pages is like that from Winterhalter's great picture of the Empress Eugénie seated in the Forest of Fontainebleau, encircled by her crinolined maids of honour, all is so exalted, so elaborate, and yet so sylvan. Into this circle the sensitive, observant child of Thackeray was admitted before its splendid summer had waned into autumn. It dazzled and charmed her, and like Shakespeare, after more than half a century, she enriched the chronicle of wasted time with praise of ladies dead.

The writer of these present lines once saw Mrs. Cameron. It was in 1875, just before she went to Ceylon, and she was waiting for a train at Haslemere station. As she stood, towering, in her flowing raiment, she watched William Allingham pacing up and down the platform, and she said to a companion, in a loud aside, "What white beards our younger poets are getting!" Just a glimpse; but how one sight seen and one phrase heard may help our comprehension of a commanding personality!

Mrs. Cameron's principal accomplishment was photography. She was almost the first, and certainly the most famous, amateur photographer of her time, and all the intellect and beauty of England trooped into her glazed fowl-house; she drove them thither before her, willing or unwilling, and their effigies remain. She was ignorant of the modern processes, and her success was greater with the sage than with the fair. F. D. Maurice said that her photography of Tennyson was "a better commentary on *Maud* and *In Memoriam* than all our critics will ever give us." On his seventy-ninth birthday, at Aldworth, Tennyson was so kind as to endow me with a copy of this particular photograph, and as he signed it he looked at it, and he murmured plaintively: "It looks like a dirty monk!" So it does; and this was the result of Mrs.

Cameron's imperfect processes, but a portfolio of her plates, including Browning, Carlyle, Darwin, Herschell, and I know not whom else, would be a precious record. She was Tennyson's near neighbour at Freshwater, and her admiration for the poet and his wife was fervent and uncompromising; yet it was the sentiment of an equal, of a Queen of Sheba bringing gifts—and she literally showered upon them orient gold and pearl—not of a flattering adorer encouraging Tennyson's weaknesses. Mrs. Cameron could be exceedingly tart with "dear Alfred" on occasion.

The portrait of Mrs. Cameron in Lady Ritchie's pages has the advantage of being a little less infatuated than some of the others. The biographer allows herself to be aware that there was an amusing, even a ludicrous, side to the energy and zeal of this masterful woman, and the reader thinks none the less highly of admirable Mrs. Cameron because he is allowed to smile now and then. It is a pity that Lady Ritchie did not permit herself, in the later days of her authorship, to cultivate her humour a little more. In the course of the long and picturesque pages dedicated here to the Kembles, the note of eulogy becomes monotonous. The dish of banana fritters is delicious, but too sweet; a dash of lemon would vastly improve it. The amiable purveyor of the feast is, however, always afraid to let herself go. The imperative Victorian optimism grasps her by the throat, and she will not say a word, or refrain from saying a word, which could possibly wound the feelings of any descendant, however remote or silly. Meanwhile, the fidelity of the picture is endangered. There is one instance, out of many, in the chapter devoted to Mrs. Fanny Kemble, whom Lady Ritchie describes as "splendid in expression, vehement, and yet tender." This passage is ruined by the word "tender"; Mrs. Kemble was noble, sensitive, and indescribably impressive, but she was no more "tender" than a tigress.

In her private conversation Lady Ritchie occasionally made use of much greater pungency; it was only in her writings that she was bound so closely to the conventionalities of 1859. Her talk was dreamy and sometimes dim, but it was radiated by flashes of wit and shrewdness. I remember having been led in her company to say of a now deceased man of letters, whose appearance was unfortunate, that he looked like a pug-dog. "Oh, no!" she replied, and I thought she was going to reprove me for evil-speaking; but she continued, "Oh no, not a pug, not like a dear pug! *He is like a toad!*"

If I held her pen I would summon up the first time I heard her talk. It was nearer fifty than forty years ago. Robert Louis Stevenson and I had both recently begun to be allowed to write in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and our editor, Leslie Stephen, invited us, for the first time, to dinner. We sat down only five to table, the host and hostess at the ends, and Miss Thackeray, as she then was, opposite to us. The Leslie Stephens seemed to have lost the use of speech, and we boys were too shy to start, so kind Miss Thackeray filled up the hiatus with soft and unbroken monologue, in the course of which she said that, being absolutely dependent upon sympathy, she "confided" very freely. "Indeed," she continued, "I tell my maid everything!" Whereupon Mrs. Leslie Stephen broke out of her gloom and said, "Oh! yes, Annie, and we do so wish you wouldn't," which brought a peal of silver laughter from the culprit. It would be sinning as she sinned herself not to admit that Lady Ritchie's foible was a sentimental vagueness. Her attention habitually wandered while she spoke, and when her mind and her tongue had parted company she was capable of uttering strange oracles.

The childhood of Anne Thackeray is known to us by a number of scenes and peeps to which she has at one time

and another admitted her eager readers. In the present volume we meet with her, a girl of sixteen or seventeen, in an old Roman palace with her father. Lockhart drives by, like a sick and brooding eagle, a dying man under the filial charge of Frederick Leighton. Elizabeth Barrett Browning sits in a dream over her sinking fire of wood; Robert Browning, loud and jolly, throws his napkin over his arm and waits at table like an Italian servant. Mrs. Kemble is enthroned in a modest lodging near the Piazza del Popolo, while Gibson shows his tinted "Venus" and stammers out a jest about it. Everybody welcomes, with gracious acts and hospitalities, poor lonely Mr. Thackeray's gentle, intelligent, and sympathetic daughter. It is all nearly seventy years ago, and but yesterday that daughter, as simple, as sweet, as witty as ever, was here amongst us, latest survivor of that great generation. She goes into a Paris drawing-room, and reveals to us the surface of that "company, so it seemed at the time—of fairy troubadours and princes." She immediately adds, "perhaps after all they were only attachés from the Embassy close by." Only too likely; but it need not trouble our pleasure that Lady Ritchie's attachés seemed always to be princes and troubadours.

The writings of Lady Ritchie must not be allowed to disappear on the rushing flood of literature; they should float in an eddy of it, like rose-leaves. Some years ago a uniform edition of her works was started, and it proceeded to ten volumes. But I do not think that it includes her essays and memoirs, her charming *Blackstick Papers*; these should be added, with the present collection.

As to her productions in the art of fiction, it is not easy to predict what duration they will enjoy. The best of them, perhaps, are the novel of her girlhood, *The Story of Elizabeth*, and that of her maturity, *Old Kensington*. She described the manners of her time with grace and sprightliness,

and she surrounded them with an atmosphere of moral beauty; she was very happy in transferring to her pages little natural traits of conversation, and she will continue to please while there are readers who enjoy what is graceful and at the same time natural and simple.

CARLYLE

CARLYLE

WHERE does Carlyle stand to-day in public esteem? When great wealth has been accumulated, even financial ruin does not prevent money from lurking here and there in corners of an estate, and doubtless a numbering of the people would reveal the survival of a considerable clan of Carlyle's worshippers. But, in the main, and comparing their loyalty to-day with what it was sixty years ago, it can hardly be questioned that no one of the great Victorians has declined in influence so steadily, and shows so little evidence of being restored to favour as the once almost omnipotent author of *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. He, at all events, is a hero whose shrine is abundantly neglected to-day. Those who admit this fact are fond of accounting for it by saying that Froude's revelations were the cause of this abandonment. This is an error; Froude may have accelerated, but he certainly did not start the landslip.

Whether we regret it or not, the fact has to be faced that there was something in the texture of Carlyle's mind, in the character of his expressed thought, which soon destroyed its attraction and its stimulus. A large portion of his writing has ceased to be interesting; his pages create fatigue and impatience in youthful readers, who read only because there persists a tradition that they must be read. Philosophers declare that this is unjust, and they point to scattered beauties of a very high order. They are right in doing so, but at present their appeal is all in vain. Carlyle has lost his potency and his magic. An inquiry into the reason of this decay presents a remarkable interest.

In my judgment the authority of Carlyle reached its zenith about sixty years ago. It was never unchallenged, but the vital quality of his books had grown to be universally acknowledged, and those who hated them could not afford to be indifferent to their energy. When I was a schoolboy of some thirteen years of age a little incident took place in my own life which I believe to be typical of those times. One afternoon a master who was taking us boys out for a walk began to speak to me—I have forgotten why—of a certain Thomas Carlyle, who lived high up in a small house in Chelsea, and thence poured forth books which were like calls from a trumpet, awakening men's consciences and rousing a sense of duty and discipline and mystery. The circumstances are as fresh with me to-day as though they had happened yesterday. There was something startling in the fervour of the revelation. I was surprised—since I was idle and inconspicuous in the class-room—at the compliment of being singled out from the herd of boys to receive this exalted utterance, and I was deeply and permanently impressed.

The master promised to lend me *Sartor Resartus*, which I tried to read, but I was too young, and I could make neither head nor tail of it. But the arousing impression remained with me, the conception of a wonderful sort of prophet or inspired hermit, trumpeting forth a message to humanity which was almost divine, and this coloured the mood in which, a year or two later, I began to churn my mind to froth over the enigmas of *Past and Present* and *Chartism*. I have told this very trifling story because I think it was characteristic of public sentiment at that time, when the earlier volumes of *Frederick the Great* were being received as though they contained the one sacred gospel of our attenuated modern age. Is there a school in the length and breadth of Great Britain where such an incident could happen to-day? I doubt it.

What we want is a monograph by one of our ablest younger critics, dealing, without prejudice or conventionality, with the problem of Carlyle. Somebody should write a Rise and Fall of the Carlylese dynasty, since the various clever authors whom his mannerisms affected would have to be included. If this could be done well, I conceive few literary tasks more rewarding, but no one has yet attempted it. The *Guide to Carlyle* which Mr. Augustus Ralli has published does not meet our requirement in the very least. These volumes are carefully and conscientiously compiled. They cover excellently the ground they pretended to cover; they may be confidently recommended to persons who wish to feel that they have read Carlyle's works, but are too busy for such a task. I cannot remember meeting with another case in which what is called "boiling down" an author has been performed with so much ability and consistency.

Those who have read the books, but whose memory of them begins to fade, may furbish it up with admirable results by studying Mr. Ralli's "methodical analyses." But, when all is said and done, his voice remains the voice of an old Carlylese adorer of 1865. He does not perceive, or refuses to admit, that there has been any change in the public attitude. He ignores all comparative considerations. For him, the Sage is still what he seemed to be sixty years ago; no less than a prophet who has left us infallible gospels, an immortal fugleman in the front of Life's Battles, in Carlyle's own phrase, "A Cato Major among degenerate men." Mr. Ralli is an accomplished commentator, but I am afraid he will never write the particular book about Carlyle which I am anxious to read.

It may be that when the popularity of Carlyle was tottering, Froude's publication of the *Reminiscences* gave it a sharp push downwards. Mr. Ralli treats this matter with much tact and good feeling, but he hardly emphasises

sufficiently the truth that Carlyle himself was responsible for that publicity. It has always seemed to me that Froude, who was certainly deficient in reserve, was unfairly treated in the controversies of 1881. He was ultimately left with no choice—Carlyle's earlier embargo having been specifically withdrawn—but to make the autobiography public, while so far from the *Reminiscences* being fatal or even injurious in the long run to the author's literary reputation, they contain—with, it is true, some of the most deplorable—many of the most picturesque and most durable pages that Carlyle ever wrote.

As to the question of his relations with Mrs. Carlyle, no human being can be certain of the truth, and no human being has a plausible excuse for conjecture. These mysteries of the *vita sexualis* are nobody's business, and in the case of the Carlyles they have been the cause of a plague of pestilent cackle. Tennyson, who was a very wise man, remarked that "Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, on the whole, enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed each other so heartily." We may leave it there, only pausing to marvel that Carlyle should have been so stupid as to maunder for public entertainment about his "remorse." He had said, at an earlier date, when there was a rumour of his composing an autobiography, "Do they want me to make away with myself that they talk like that?" That he did ultimately "make away with himself" seems to prove a failure of judgment, the result of senility. But it cannot affect his position among the leading English writers.

One source of the increasing neglect of Carlyle was touched by Henry James in a memorable passage in which, while doing full justice to the Sage's qualities, he summed up by confessing that, when all is said, Carlyle was "the most disagreeable in character of men of genius of equal magnificence." The great authors of the world, even when

they have unpleasing characteristics like Rousseau or Swift, remain on the whole attractive; the reader flatters himself that he could have got on the blind side of the author, would have escaped being the victim of his petulance. But no one can lay to his bosom the flattering unction that he would have found a blind side to Carlyle. His voice was as uniformly harsh as that of the Sphinx in the desert, and, like that, was practically useless, because it preluded nothing definite. The Victorians were vastly impressed, in the midst of their virtuous prosperity, by a preacher who told them that England was going down to the Devil, and that society was just a confusion of jackassery. No doubt the voice was a rousing one, and it was that of a man of prodigious ability and a master of distinguished expression. But it was guided by no fixed ideas, and its inconsistency, when once the original amazement at it had abated, was so obvious as to be fatiguing. It lashed the materialist for his shabby gospel of mammonism, and then, when he repented and became an idealist, it shrieked to him to come down from those "Himalaya peaks and indigo skies." It had no leniency to miscreants, and treated all men as rogues or fools.

There was no pleasing Carlyle, and if he was wearisome as a preacher, he was futile as a prophet. He failed altogether to read the signs of the future aright; he underrated mechanism, and had no conception of its value in the reduction of human distress; he professed to hope for the race, but he started in a determination to be disappointed. What is to be thought of a political watchman of the night who could see nothing in Lord Beaconsfield in 1875 except "a cursed old Jew, not worth his weight in cold bacon"? What is to be thought of a military observer who declared the Prussian army to be the ultimate expression of good government in its "victory over chaos"? These outbursts might amuse for a moment,

or even for a generation, but long ago they became merely tiresome.

Incessant yelping is one of the most wearisome things in the world, and Carlyle, with all his monstrous talent, has ruined his own reputation by his impetuous irritability. Nothing endears the handsomest dog to those whom he disturbs all through the night by his perpetual bayings at the moon. What George Meredith called Carlyle's "hideous blustering impatience in the presence of progressive facts" expressed itself in a series of more or less melodious howls which roused attention at first, and then grew taken for granted, and then became an insupportable bore. Let any one to-day judge for himself, not taking the Victorian eulogists nor such a perfectly honest but prejudiced guide as Mr. Augustus Ralli, but planting himself down in an easy-chair with the actual text of *Past and Present* in his hands and the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* on the table at his side. Will he pass an agreeable, or a useful, or even a tolerable hour in the company of these famous treatises? I think not.

He will read about "infinite sorrowful jangle" and the identity of "might and right." He will learn that the Practical aristocrat in combination with the Titular will make Chaos Cosmos, and that those who do not realise this fact had better stay at home and hunt rats. He will find himself suffocating in a sort of cloud of poisonous anger; wherever the author takes him, his fellow-creatures are described, even the gentlest and most unselfish, as "apes" with "angry dog-faces." If we wish to know why Carlyle has ceased to be an influence, let us listen—briefly, for the sound is not a pleasant one—to the roarings of *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and the denunciations of our Scavenger Age.

Hitherto, I have spoken—very briefly and imperfectly, for want of space—as the Devil's Advocate. But so great an artificer of British speech must not be relinquished in

so summary a fashion. If I plead for a dismissal from our text-books of the public scold, who tormented his contemporaries by his tempest and agony of thought, who blew hot and cold with a pertinacity enough to drive the Satyr of criticism crazy, who preached the doctrine of Silence with vociferous and laughable volubility, who looked upon Germany as the only perfect and imitable State—if I dare to express the belief that several of Carlyle's most famous books are only just redeemed from failure by the amazing felicity of particular passages, I am not, therefore, blind to his splendour or deaf to his music. He was not, I contend, a prophet of any permanent importance, but he was an artist of the highest originality. He knew nothing of human character, but he could paint the exterior of life with a vividness which has not been surpassed, which has very rarely been equalled. He could not fathom the tenderness of the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but he could bring before us, once and for ever, "an Irish blackguard, with a fine brain, and sun-like eyes, and a great fund of goosery."

He had little insight into the meditations of Wordsworth, but he could imprint for ever upon our memories the solemn poet, isolated at a London dinner-table, and "munching what appeared to be raisins." This pictorial quality animates *The French Revolution*, which is, doubtless, the masterpiece among Carlyle's set productions. But it positively inspires the *Reminiscences* and the *Correspondence*, the best of his thirty volumes. It fluctuates through the huge *Frederick*, and it is not absent from the *Cromwell*. It constantly flashes out in the early critical essays, any one of which is worth all the political and controversial treatises put together. It is these latter, with their lugubrious contempt for everything and everybody, which have disgusted modern readers, and have led to a disaffection which unjustly includes Carlyle's best performances.

THE FAIRY IN THE GARDEN

THE FAIRY IN THE GARDEN

Of all English poets now on the happy side of fifty, it is Mr. Walter de la Mare who has had the most direct influence on the writers of his own day. This is the more remarkable because it has been gained by no expenditure of advertising energy, or even by the exercise of any faculty not directly dependent on poetry. No living author is more hidden from the public view than Mr. de la Mare, nor is there one who contributes less to the discussion of themes of general interest. In the loud chorus of those who desire to improve us, and change us, and set our heels where our heads used to be, he is obstinately silent. He puts forward no theories, starts no heresies, and leads no troop to battle. If it were possible to overlook Mr. de la Mare he would remain invisible, and if he is perceived it is precisely as a violet is betrayed by its perfume.

He is revealed by the penetrating intensity of his genius, and not by any effort of his own to obtain notice or to arrest attention. As a poet he is a creation of the twentieth century, and he started the rich harvest of the "Georgians," as it is the fashion to call them He is the quietest and the least obtrusive of them all, but by dint of his consistency and his pertinacious fidelity to one definite type of beauty, he continues to lead them. His delicate, cool music runs in an undertone at the root of everything that is produced in serious verse to-day, and yet nothing is more difficult than to define the character of his art.

When Mr. Walter de la Mare began to write, twenty years ago, the prestige of the latest Victorians was but

faintly questioned. I refuse to consider that it is questioned now, in any reasonable court of judgment, but there is a great difference between an historical appreciation of merit and a belief that in Tennyson picturesque description had said its last word, that no philosophical poetry would supersede Browning, or that in Swinburne verse had reached its limit of precision and beauty. The real heresy about the Victorians lay not in recognising their power and skill, but in supposing that they had exhausted Nature, and that no writers would, even in the future, do more than fumble along the path where Meredith and Arnold had climbed with springing footsteps.

Mr. Walter de la Mare's earliest volume, called *Songs of Childhood*, did not attract much attention, partly because of its quietness, but more because it was entirely out of key with the poetry fashionable at the end of the nineteenth century. In ethical respects extremely unlike the verse of Mr. Thomas Hardy, that of Mr. de la Mare, especially in its earlier manifestations, has this in common with it, that it examines with scrupulous care little phenomena of Nature, and of Nature acting upon the soul, which had appeared too insignificant to attract the attention of other recent poets. But the *Songs of Childhood* also exemplified a quality which is essential to Mr. de la Mare, the delicate splendour of his fancy, as in "Tartary" and in "The Isle of Lone," exhibited often with a recklessness which is on the border of incoherency, but is preserved by a happy instinct from passing outside the bounds of what poetry permits itself. The authors of past time with whom Mr. de la Mare has most in common are Blake (in the *Songs of Innocence*), Coleridge (in *Kubla Khan*), and Christina Rossetti (in *Goblin Market*). He has not borrowed from these magicians, but his enchantments are of the same order as theirs.

All Mr. de la Mare's poems are short, and many of

them are epigrams, in the Greek sense, mere seed-pearls of song. Very rarely he exceeds the limit of forty lines, and when he is tempted to do so he is not always at his happiest. It seems as though a brief flight of music suited best the interpretation of the fugitive moods and aëry visions which sweep over his spirit. Perhaps the central feature of his poetry is the place which beauty takes in the expression of it. Life is a dream to him, but it is not, as it is to so many writers nowadays, a slumber haunted by hideous and loathsome images, but a serene region in which wonder and mystery have not destroyed, but have a little disarranged the common and logical sequence of experience. The poet is passive under the stress of the illusions which pass before his eyes between sleeping and waking, and a beauty which is beyond all earthly compass continually floats across him, masking the realities of earth. It is especially in fragrant gardens that his vision reveals to him the mystery and the wonder of the world :—

> " Speak not—whisper not;
> Here bloweth thyme and bergamot;
> Softly on the evening hour,
> Secret herbs their spices shower.
> Dark-spiked rosemary and myrrh,
> Lean-stalked, purple lavender;
> Hides within her bosom, too,
> All her sorrows, bitter rue."

The last of these couplets exemplifies a certain weakness of structure in Mr. de la Mare's verse. What he means to say is that " bitter rue, also, hides all her sorrows within her bosom," but he disperses the words in defiance of their ordinary sequence. This seems to arise out of a certain languor characteristic of his mind, but it is to be noticed, also, that when the ear is accustomed to these inversions and contortions they cease to offer any discomfort.

In "The Children of Stare," which seems to be the earliest fully characteristic poem of Mr. de la Mare, we find already present the main qualities of his verse, its note of twilight reverie, its touch of bright colour, its Æolian melody rising and falling. This piece is worthy of close attention; it exemplifies the essential character of the writer. We are introduced to a winter scene in the garden of an ancient house where everything would be silent and sinister but for the presence of children whose "small and heightened faces" are "like wine-red winter buds." In six stanzas we have a finished picture of the group, in gay dresses, playing against the wintry background, faintly glittering in the moon; it is like some Dutch water-colour drawing of the seventeenth century. And, very suggestively, this icy merriment in the dim light fills the poet's heart not with commonplace reflections appropriate to the scene, but with strange emotions, "thick mystery, wild peril, law like an iron rod."

The power of fear is never far out of the range of Mr. de la Mare's vision. He expatiates on the horror of little noises heard at night, while the deluding echoes of birds calling in the sky stir him with vague apprehension. The world for him is full of intimidating whispers and phantom footfalls, and when darkness falls upon the garden he shivers at bodiless presences which pass him and repass. In all this he is like a child, incident to fears, as Shakespeare puts it, unaffected by argument or proof, but ready at a moment's notice to create around himself a world of mystery and panic.

The art of expressing the inexpressible has been given to Mr. de la Mare in rare fulness. If a central feature of his poetry is its tranquillity, it is not quiet with self-satisfaction or aplomb; but hushed as one who hangs on tiptoe to hear a rustling sound, or to watch a furtive shadow in the woodland. An examination of one of his poems will

throw light on his method in nearly all of them, and I therefore quote the whole of " The Mocking Fairy " : —

" ' Won't you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill ? '
Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden;
' *Can't* you look out of your window, Mrs. Gill ? '
Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden;
But the air was still, the cherry boughs were still,
And never from her window looked out Mrs. Gill
On the Fairy shrilly mocking in the garden.

" ' What have they done with you, poor Mrs. Gill ? '
Quoth the Fairy, brightly dancing in the garden;
' Where have they hidden you, you poor old Mrs. Gill ? '
Quoth the Fairy, brightly glancing in the garden;
But night's faint veil now wrapped the hill,
Stark 'neath the stars stood the dead-still mill,
And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs. Gill
The Fairy mimbling-mambling in the garden."

This little poem, like all the dominant class in Mr. de la Mare's work, produces the impression of a thing seen at twilight, from a certain distance, by a near-sighted person. Nothing is plainly distinguished, but a series of indefinite yet intelligible touches give a mysterious and highly imaginative result. What are the relations of Mrs. Gill and the Fairy? What " have they done " with poor Mrs. Gill? Is she dead, or merely dull and indifferent? Is the Fairy beneficent or sinister, a friendly or merely a taunting spirit? We do not know, and the answer to these questions is completely immaterial, because it is not the poet's aim to tell a clear tale, but to awaken in us emotions of fear, wonder, and faint pity. What is not immaterial is to note that in producing these shadowy effects the poet does not fall back upon carelessness of diction. On the contrary, it is when his pictures are most phantasmal, and the moods he presents most elusive, that his language becomes peculiarly choice. Consider the fastidious appropriateness of every epithet in the lyric called " Winter,"

of every selected tone in the little harmony called "The Song of the Secret."

It is not only in the tenebrous and the phantasmal that Mr. de la Mare excels. He has also a mood in which he indulges in sunlit images and a profusion of colour. These are the moments in which he is "crazed with the spell" of Arabian vision, and the world is shining for him in sunbeams and dew. But the essential character is the same, and the outlook upon life is still the unreasoning impression of childhood. Very characteristic is the ballad I have already mentioned, "The Isle of Lone," one of the most elaborate which the author has published. What would the rough Scotch critics, the Jeffreys who hooted to Wordsworth, "This will never do!" who swept Keats back to his "gallipots," have said to this preposterous tale of three dwarfs who lived alone in a tropic island in the company of apes and parrots? :—

> "They sate to sup in a jasmine bower
> Lit pale with flies of fire,
> Their bowls the hue of the iris-flower,
> And lemon their attire."

They taught three old apes to sing, they fished and they hunted foxes, they blew music out of twisted shells, and they raced with their night-caps on through the surf of the dark-green sea. But at last two of them quarrelled, and drowned one another, while the survivor transferred the night-caps to the apes, and then expired in a coral grot. This is the instance in which Mr. de la Mare has resigned himself most unreservedly to the illogical dream of childhood. The result is saved from failure by its beauty, but we approach the confines of absurdity. "Off the Ground," in which the three farmers dance down to the sea, has the same character, perhaps more legitimately exercised.

The gift of Mr. de la Mare is confined within a small

circle, and he has to beware of repeating his effects too constantly. If it were necessary to hint a fault in his poetry it would be a certain tendency to monotony. It is therefore better to dwell on a few of his lyrics at a time than to attempt to read them all. Three or four of his songs and ballads, chosen from any section of his books, reveal his extreme and sensitive delicacy, his tranquillity of imagination, his purity and elegance. He is the type of the romantic lyrist, delivered from all bonds of logic and definition. His humble genius knows no touch of arrogance or disdain. It wanders up and down the woodland brooks exhaling its "inflexible douceur" (as Anatole France might say) in a music sweeter than their own.

GOETHE

GOETHE

THE massive new *Life of Goethe* forms a monument to the assiduity and rectitude of a great scholar, the late historiographer of Scotland. Peter Hume Brown, one of the most modest of men, was eminent not so much for vivacity of style as for stiff accuracy. Other historians have been more amusing than the biographer of John Knox and George Buchanan, none have pursued the truth more rigorously. All through his life Hume Brown cultivated, as a recreating side-show, the memory of Goethe; and with his accustomed thoroughness he explored every nook of the immense Goethe literature which Germany has produced.

In 1903, pausing in the publication of his great *History of Scotland*, Hume Brown brought out *The Youth of Goethe*, which is reprinted as the first volume of the work before us. He did not live quite long enough to complete the story (he died in 1919), but left some parts to be filled up by his friend and companion, Lord Haldane. As it now stands, it is doubtless the most trustworthy biography of Goethe that exists; not the most readable nor the most entertaining, for Hume Brown was a little dry, and wrote for scholars. The general reader will continue to turn to Lewes' *Life*, first published in 1855 and closely revised in 1863. It would be an error to underrate the value of Lewes' book, which is almost a classic, but the new biography far exceeds it in exactitude.

No specific attention is drawn by Lord Haldane in his interesting preface to features of novelty in his friend's

work. Nor am I sufficiently acquainted with Goethe literature in Germany to say what in Hume Brown is absolutely new. But in comparison with other English lives, it is obvious that Lewes and his followers knew nothing of the *Urfaust*, which was not discovered until 1887, and the importance of these scenes, composed at Weimar so early as 1774, is immense. Still more personal to Hume Brown are his investigations made at Ilmenau, and particularly at Wetzlar, where Goethe settled in 1772; it was at the latter town that the young poet met Lotte Buff. One cannot but regret that the austerity of the historian forbade him to make more picturesque use of the material which he is known to have collected.

But I pass to a more important point. When the almost completed manuscript fell from the writer's hand a curious *lacuna* was discovered. Hume Brown was found to have left one chapter unwritten; where the "Second Part of Faust" should have been examined there was a gap. The biographer had evidently continued to shrink from the formidable but inevitable task of grappling with this problem, and death took him before he had made up his mind to face it. This is not to be regretted, since it has given Lord Haldane occasion to write what is certainly the principal contribution to criticism which this new *Life of Goethe* presents. His unusual familiarity with both literature and philosophy, combined with his habit of judicial analysis, points Lord Haldane out as the best possible guide through the obscurest wilderness of symbol which the great poetry of the world presents.

The great disadvantage of Lewes as the biographer of Goethe was his lack of sympathy with mysticism. His association with George Eliot did not help him to a comprehension of spiritual symbol. When he reached the "Second Faust" he burst out in splenetic ridicule unworthy of a serious critic. He called it "a failure," "an

elaborate mistake," and he confirmed the easy reader in a natural prejudice. This is remembered, but what is forgotten is that Lewes relented, and gave a full and on the whole a fair analysis of the poem. He said that it falls off in the last two acts, but so it does. He was exasperated by all the interlinked allegories, and he wrote that the kiss of Gretchen was worth a thousand of them. In point of fact the allegories of Goethe's old age are like Watts' ideal compositions in painting; it may be suggested that both are not proper themes for plastic art. But at least it is right to inquire what a mind of the majesty of Goethe's intended by these elaborate symbols. The "Second Faust," perplexing as it is, must be accepted as the ripe result of a lifetime of reflection; it is the final exposure of Goethe's theory of life.

It may be said—I think it must in candour be admitted—that the critic of conduct and the lyrist do not amalgamate in the "Second Faust," but that is surely the difficulty in the whole of Goethe's poetry. Marionettes originally suggested the subject of "Faust," and something artificial, superhuman, or non-human clung about the poem to the very close. But no guide through the complex and tortuous pathways of the "Second Faust" has ever proffered so bright a lantern as Lord Haldane does in chapter xxxviii. of the present work. If I still find myself stumbling in the dark, I am sure it is my own fault.

The English, like the French, reader finds a difficulty in tracing a settled method in the development of Goethe's imaginative writings. At first sight they seem a baffling exhibition of colossal fragments, like the startling experiments in sculpture of Rodin's later years. Goethe strikes the Western mind as a noble empiric, for ever starting on fresh paths and capriciously plunging aside to essay new conquests. To reconcile this habit with the practice of our race we must bear in mind what Goethe proceeded

from and what was his aim as a poet. We must recall his own observation that he came out of the "desert"—as he calls it in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—of the literature of the early eighteenth century, and we must couple with this his own disconcerting statement to Eckermann that all a poet's works should be essentially "occasional pieces," that being, he said, "the earliest and most genuine of all forms of poetry."

What I confess I find myself unable to concede to Lord Haldane is that Goethe had a settled purpose of any kind in the distribution of his poetry. His aim did not, I venture to think, include any such design, and he proposed to himself no uniformity. His purpose was much wider: it was to develop beauty at all points out of the shapelessness of things, the *Unform*, and in doing this, a giant's business, he left much shapelessness indifferently behind him. His vast intelligence was for ever contending with an endless series of primitive conceptions, *urideen*, and he was content to be multiform, because he believed that the aim of art should not be art, but life itself.

In his *Sprüche* Goethe uses this remarkable phrase: "Beauty is a manifestation of secret laws of Nature which but for this revelation would remain concealed from us for ever." When he speaks of Nature, however, it is not the outer world of mountain, lake, and cloud to which Wordsworth gave a symbolic unity of purpose. With Goethe Nature is something moral and intellectual, something *vernünftig;* he regarded the world of thought, in which all the seeds of beauty lie, as a huge immortal individuality. In his pantheism God embraces the whole life of man in its physical, but above all in its mental, relations,—God not merely reflected in Nature, but contained in it, Nature concealing God from the ignorant, but revealing Him to the wise. He hated a system—people do not often recognise how radically unsystematic Goethe

insists on being. He follows his mood, always in reference to a guiding scheme of thought, but never for the purpose of proclaiming such a scheme. As Lord Haldane says, Goethe is " pre-eminently a reflective poet, but he is not consistently so."

The introduction of the " Helena " episode and the Euphorion scenes have greatly bewildered those who have sought a consecutive purpose in the " Second Faust." But they are the result of moods, we may almost declare of caprices. In his *Xenien* Goethe had written that " Greek is the sheath into which the dagger of the mind fits best." But although he was for ever attracted by the sensuous colour and the perfect form of Greek art, he was never classical in the Latin sense. He transferred into German the forms of Greek tragedy, but he gave them an Oriental tone.

As for Euphorion, the mysterious offspring of Helena and Faust, no one, in spite of Carlyle's disclaimer, can reasonably doubt that this radiant being, who clasps the maid of fire and tries to soar in her pursuit, only to die at the feet of his parents, was the shadow cast on Goethe's emotion by the brief career and heroic death of Byron. Here also Goethe follows his mood, with the result that Euphorion is simply jettisoned into the poem, as Helena had been before him.

The Second Part of *Faust* occupied Goethe until within a few months of his death. Hume Brown describes with sober authority the final scenes, which have been the subject of much romance. He considers that the poet's last words were addressed to Ottilie : " Give me your little hand," but that Goethe certainly said to his servant, " Open the shutters that more light may come in," on which the legend of the symbolic " Mehr Licht " has been founded.

At the very last his memory seemed to return to Schiller. The deaths of magnificent old men, whose mental powers

show no decay, are infinitely tragic; Goethe and Voltaire should have rounded their experience in a hundred years. Goethe had recorded in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* his attitude towards the art he practised. He had explained that his nature drove him—and of the truth of this his whole history is a witness—from one extreme of feeling to another, and that his poetry would have been meaningless if he had not determined to make it always a reflection of his shifting intellectual experience. He did this consistently, and as a consequence all his imaginative works are, to use his own phrase, just "fragments of one great confession."

Goethe puts it in the *Wunderjahre* that the purpose of his life had been to preserve high thoughts and a pure heart, and in spite of many inconsistencies of conduct there are few of the great writers of the world of whom it could be alleged at the last that they had succeeded so well in following their aim. He was in conflict always with the traditional religious prejudices of his time, but he remained obedient to the dictates of intellectual piety. At the very end, with everything falling from him, Goethe proceeded still over death towards life, steadfast in the gathering darkness, "und so über Gräber vorwärts!" Perhaps, after all, he had lived long enough. He had found expression for the inspiring message of his noble genius. The top-stone of the pyramid of his career had been laid, and his desire in early years that the end of his life might be in harmony with its beginning had been gratified to the full.

COUNT D'ORSAY'S PORTRAITS

COUNT D'ORSAY'S PORTRAITS

A KIND friend, Miss A. Verini, has presented me with an interesting specimen of what Americans call "association" books. It is a folio volume of no fewer than sixty-four of the portraits drawn by the famous Count D'Orsay, and it comes directly from the heart of the radiant society which met at Gore House eighty years ago. Single copies of these prints are not infrequently met with, but such a collection as this must be almost unique. It was made by Lady Blessington's niece, Marguerite Agnes Power, who formed part of the Gore House establishment, and who has dated the time of her having the portraits bound together, July 1842.

As D'Orsay was living under the same roof, it is reasonable to suppose that he helped to arrange the collection, which consists, in the main, of proofs before letters. So far as I have been able to make out, most of the portraits by D'Orsay which were engraved before 1842 are here, and I see no reason to doubt the tradition that my folio represents the Count's own selection from his work. He was not a great artist—indeed Redgrave scorns him altogether—and he was an imitator of the other far more skilful Alfred, A. E. Chalon; but he had a talent of his own, and he is representative of that amazing epoch of George IV., when gentlemen wore waistcoats embroidered with flowers of gold, and wound garlands of jewelled chains across their bosoms, when even serious politicians daubed the redundancy of their whiskers "with thy incomparable oil, Macassar."

We must go back to August 1822, when there set out

from St. James's Square a party bent on tasting to the full the pleasures of continental adventure. They comprised the Earl of Blessington and his lovely Countess, her sister and a friend, and a very young French gentleman who had been introduced to them by his brother-in-law, the Count de Grammont. This youth was Count Alfred D'Orsay, twenty-one years of age, who had come over to England to take part in the coronation of George IV. The Count Alfred was exquisite in the highest degree, nonpareil among the dandies. He was " Cupid unchained," according to Byron; he was beautiful as a dream; he had all the accomplishments, all the amiabilities; he was ready for anything.

Lord and Lady Blessington had exhausted the resources of wealth and fashion, and the " allurements of pleasure," as their biographer notes with alarm, had ceased to rouse response from their jaded nerves. On these victims of ennui there flashed, in all the triumph of his impudent beauty, the " cupidon dechainé " of Byron's famous exclamation, and Lord and Lady Blessington tasted a new gusto in life. They closed round their " cupidon " a golden net; they secured, with ardent hands, their incomparable captive; and lest any one else should try to share his attentions, they carried him off in the crimson velvet cage of " a very extensive *batterie de cuisine* " to Italy.

There, at Genoa, they met Byron, whose acquaintance had long been the unrealised dream of Lady Blessington's existence. They forced themselves upon the moody poet by an ingenious ruse, and Byron, not willing to be caught, nevertheless succumbed; he admitted that Lady Blessington was " very pretty, even in the morning " ; but he was most interested in their companion, in the dazzling French Count who sparkled and capered around them in an ecstasy of elegant high spirits.

It appeared that the youthful D'Orsay was as accom-

plished in the fine arts as in everything else. Lady Blessington was not to be satisfied until Lord Byron had consented to "sit" to her enchanting friend. This the poet, who was just finishing "Don Juan" and about to start in a few weeks on his last adventure, positively consented to do.

The result was the very interesting full-length drawing which is reproduced in the fifth volume of Lord Ernle's edition of the *Letters and Journals*, and also the kitcat profile in my folio, which I think is less well known. Both show that D'Orsay, now twenty-two years of age, already possessed considerable proficiency with the pencil. Lady Blessington considered that by her conversation she "contrived to place a check on the continuation of the most glaring immoralities" of *Don Juan*. On the other hand, in conversation with the precocious Count D'Orsay, Byron is said to have culled some particulars concerning the vagaries of "Society" new even to his practical experience. It was not for Lady Blessington to affect the prude or to throw stones at "immoralities"; she (and they all) lived under what another friend might have called "a dome of many-coloured glass."

In June 1823, the Blessingtons, in all their magnificence, and still jealously guarding their unchained Cupid, said farewell to Byron, who wept, and who presented a ring to Alfred, "formed of lava and so far adapted to the fire of his years and character," and then they started for Naples, where they exercised a profuse hospitality for two years and a half.

It is no part of my business, as I turn over the plates in my folio, to follow the remarkable adventures of the Blessington household. Count D'Orsay had the excellent habit of dating his portraits, and we catch him up again in 1833, when he drew the Marquess Conyngham, Count Matusciewitz, and George Byng, afterwards Lord Strafford. These were fashionables whose fame has dreadfully dwindled,

but they adorned the circle which Lady Blessington had now gathered around her.

Lord Blessington, having chained Cupid by marrying him to his daughter Harriet, " then an infant of the age of fifteen years or thereabouts," had died, none too soon, in 1829, and Lady Blessington, who had had to sell her famous golden bed swung on the backs of two large silver swans, with other of her preposterous finery, had come back to England and had settled more modestly but still very genteelly in Seamore Place. Here she and Count D'Orsay welcomed society, which consisted almost entirely of gentlemen, in a long library, lined alternately with gorgeously bound books and mirrors.

The portraits in my folio volume represent the selected visitors, who sat when " the splendid person of Count D'Orsay, in a careless attitude upon the ottoman," could be sufficiently aroused to seize his inspired pencil. In 1834 the great Lord Durham, soon to be known as the benevolent despot of Canada, became an intimate friend, and here he is, drawn with a look of great intensity and with narrow, tight-pressed lips, very much as he must have looked when he was leading his unruly flock of advanced Whigs.

Eminent men of letters hastened to Seamore Place to pay homage to the enthusiastic authoress, embowered in her *fauteuil* of yellow satin, while her delicate white hand, a blaze of diamond rings, ever rested on the back of a book written by her guest of the occasion. Count D'Orsay, advanced from the days in Naples when he " spoke very little English, but had a great passion for ' Yankee Doodle,' " introduced a rattle of sprightly gossip to relieve the lady's too passionate intensity.

His profile of Edward Bulwer Lytton is one of his best. It is dated April 24, 1837, soon after the novelist had addressed to the Countess of Blessington the very long

epistle in verse which appears in his poetical works. Bulwer leans back, as if in animated conversation, with a bright eye fixed, no doubt, on his lovely hostess.

Still more valuable is the portrait of Walter Savage Landor, very characteristic, and less conventional than most of D'Orsay's. Landor had known the Blessingtons since the Florence days, in 1827, and remained to the last a faithful friend. It is coyly stated by her biographer that "the strongest attachment which comes within legitimate limits was soon formed between Lady Blessington and the celebrated author of *Imaginary Conversations*." Like Wordsworth's nightingale, she was a creature of a fiery heart. It is odd to find Thomas Carlyle in the fashionable circle, but here he is, drawn by D'Orsay in May 1839, just after the publication of *Sartor Resartus*, evidently on his best behaviour and in a very high collar over a faultless stock.

Lady Blessington was Circe among the wild beasts of the literary woodland. And here is William Jerdan, looking anything but stylish, and Richard Monkton Milnes as "the Cool of the Evening," and James Sheridan Knowles, who is my sole link with this galaxy of faded fashion, since I knew him in his old age when I was a very little boy. But to my sorrow, Charles Dickens is not here, although he sat in his turn to D'Orsay, whom he mentions frequently, and with much affection, in his letters. It seems that Dickens did not yield to Cupid's pencil until Margaret Agnes Power had closed my collection.

It is wonderful how this folio volume brings back a phantom crowd of celebrities and dandies, large solemn creatures in all the glory of neckcloths and snuff-boxes, revolving round the divine and ridiculous Countess of Blessington, now (in 1842) far from juvenile, but still with "a form exquisitely moulded, although with an inclination to fulness." And the eternal companion, the ceaseless

cisebeo, as Haydon saw him, " bounding into his cab " and driving off " like a young Apollo with a fiery Pegasus," the D'Orsay of whom Disraeli (Lady Chesterfield is in my folio, but why is there no Disraeli?) has described " the satin waistcoat, the creaseless hosen," the jewelled wristbands and the essence of high-breeding, he, too, seems, a faint and phantom presence, to be hovering inside the too-ostentatious tooled morocco covers of my book. The man for whom Bulwer wrote *The Lady of Lyons*—" in the wish to prove the truth of Alfred's kind belief that I could hit off the dramatic knack "—the friend to whom *Godolphin* was dedicated, the companion of Thackeray, of the Duke of Wellington (" D'Orsay was the only artist who ever made me look like a gentleman "), of Charles Greville, of Liszt, was not a negligible person.

But even such a fortune as that which Lady Blessington had inherited could not support for more than half a century the reckless expenditure of the establishments in Seamore Place and Gore House. One misfortune after another fell on the luckless couple. As Lady Blessington's biographer quaintly remarks, the effects of the potato blight of 1845 were intimately felt in the sumptuous apartments of Gore House, and so were the outstanding bills of Count D'Orsay's jewellers and bootmakers.

In 1849 came the long-expected smash, and D'Orsay, who had not left Lady Blessington for a quarter of a century, decamped to Paris with a single portmanteau. The lady followed, with the owner of my folio, and the family closed up again, but the glory had departed, and in a few months both Circe and her Cupid had passed away. Napoleon III., mindful of the happy hours he had spent in the salons of Gore House, followed the body of Alfred D'Orsay to the grave; and he also is in my folio, as he sat in October 1839, trying to look as much like a London dandy as possible.

Mr. James D. Milner, the Director of the National Portrait Gallery, who has been good enough to examine my album, and to identify those portraits in it which are not in the national collections, is uncertain whether D'Orsay actually lithographed the portraits himself, or employed an engraver for that purpose. Mr. Milner is inclined to the latter supposition. Some of the lithographs are slightly tinted with red on the cheeks and lips, but this addition appears in all cases to have been done by hand. It is strange that no one remembers having seen the original drawings for these lithographs. Surely they have not all disappeared. Can they have been transported to Paris in the flight of 1849? Or are some of them still lurking in private collections in this country?

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